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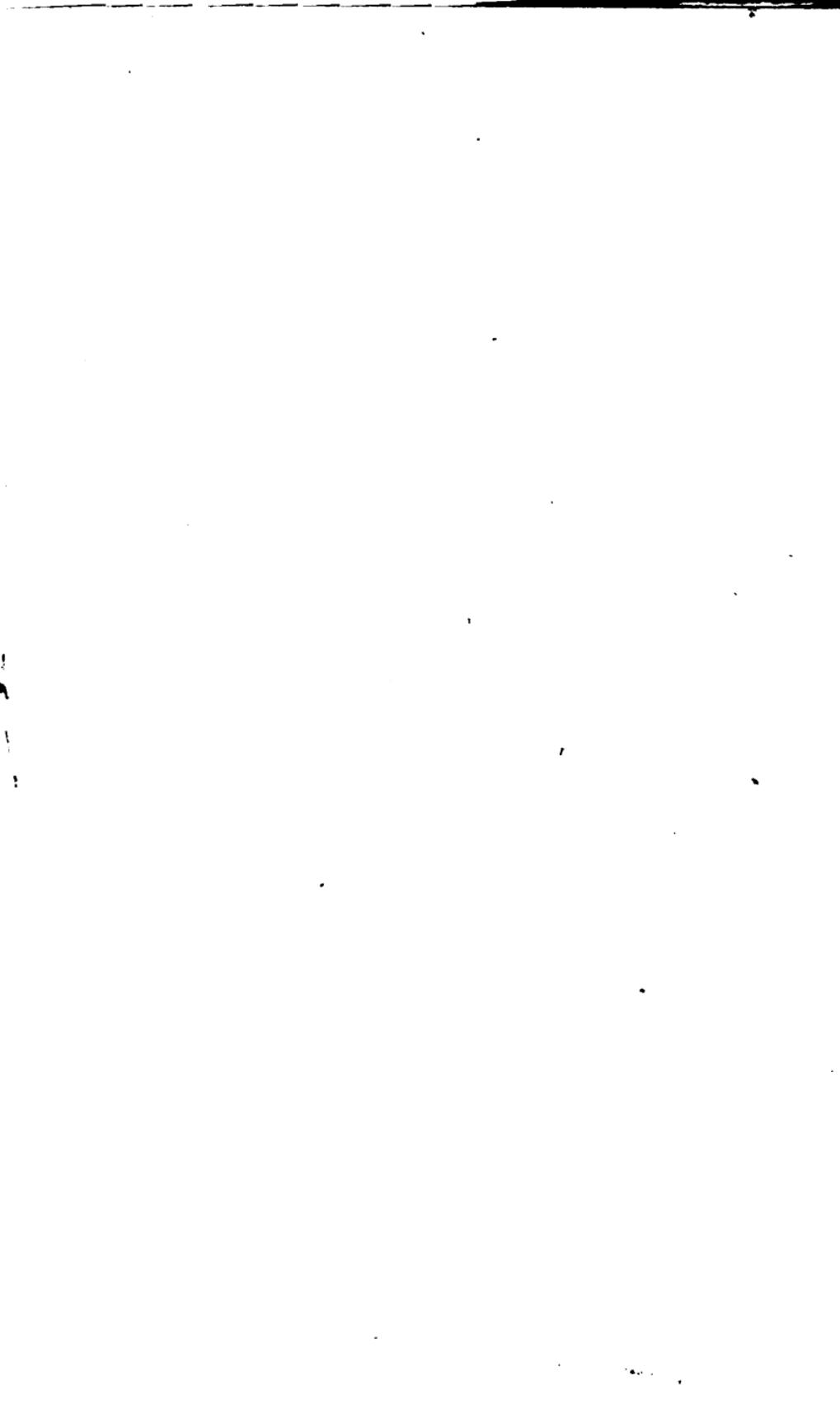
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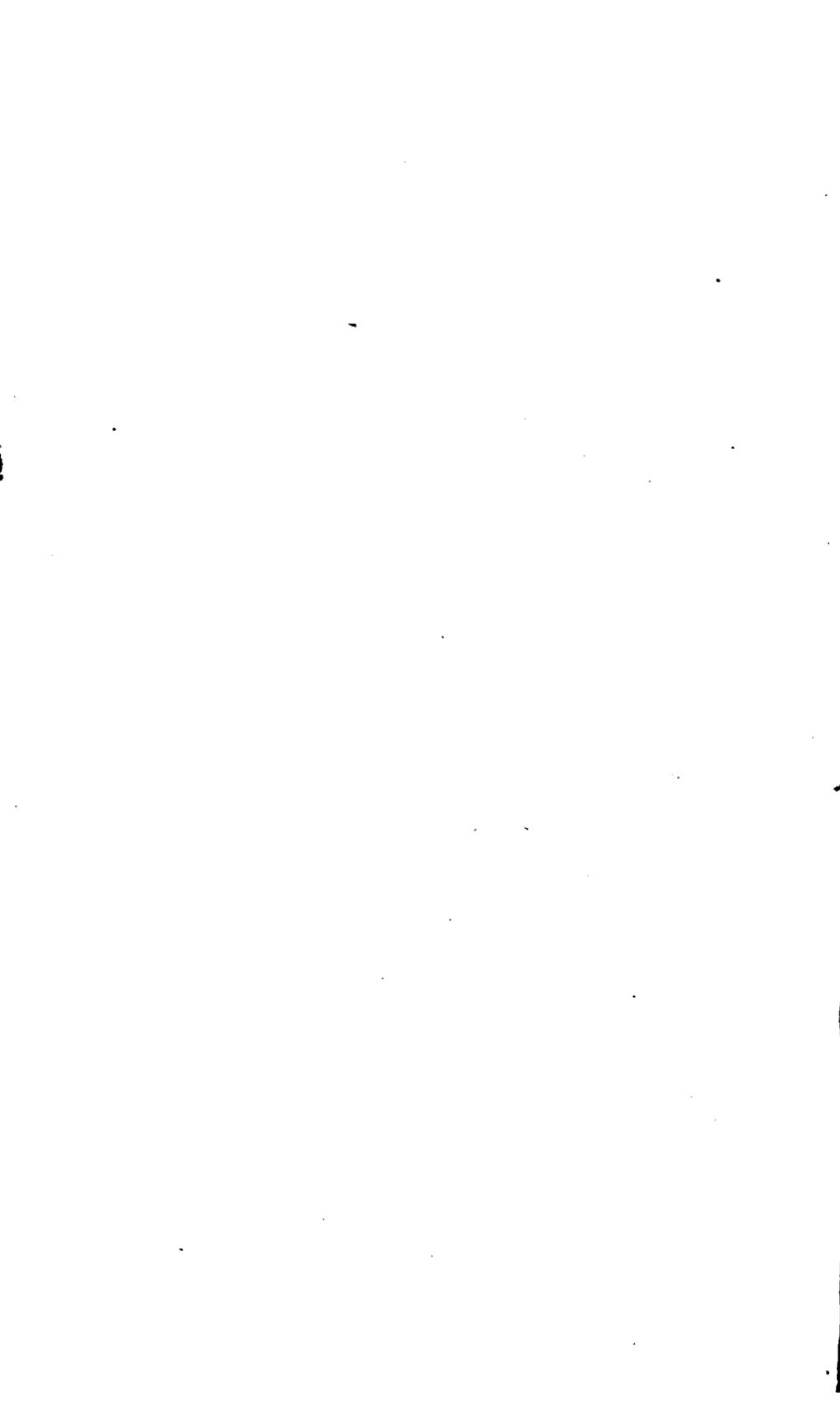
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J A C K B R A G.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

JACK BRAG.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"SAYINGS AND DOINGS,"—"MAXWELL," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1837.



J A C K B R A G.

CHAPTER I.

HAVING given the reader a brief and succinct account of the prosperous progress of Mr. Brown, and deposited him in safety with his mother and sister, it now becomes necessary to give a glance at our hero Jack, and the measures he adopted under the peculiar and embarrassing circumstance of being accepted by two very charming women in the course of one afternoon.

For a few moments after the arrival of the second note—that from Blanche—the little man was greatly puzzled how to act. That the answers to his declarations were jokes he had not the slightest suspicion, and therefore his difficulty arose from the necessity of at once making up his mind. Unlike Gay's hero,

he felt that he *must* say “a word” to both his captives : in fact, he was forced on the instant to decide, yea or nay—widow or maid. This was really a puzzler even for Jack, who scratched his hair half out of curl before he had got near a conclusion. At length he determined to postpone the *éclaircissement* until the evening, and in the mean time to throw himself in the way of Sir Charles Lydiard, in order, if he could, to extract from him his opinion of the widow’s merits, and ascertain, if possible, the extent of his anger and vengeance if Jack should make *her* his choice.

For this purpose Jack began what he called his tour of the Clubs — but, in truth, that of their doors—for Jack had not as yet achieved the *right* of crossing the threshold of any one of them. Nevertheless, he was not an unfrequent occupant of their halls, into which, by asking after some man whom he knew to be out of town, or who did not belong to that particular society, he made his way ; and having performed that evolution once or twice, without, or, as he considered, with, perfect success, he at length encountered

Sir Charles, and immediately joined him in his walk towards Grosvenor Street.

In one of those amusing and instructive works upon natural history, in which we find recorded the traits of character peculiar to different animals, there is an account of a goose which had formed so strong an attachment to a Newfoundland dog belonging to the same master, that she never was easy out of his society. Neptune was conscious of this kindly feeling, and reciprocated it to a certain extent; and whenever they were together in the yard, *he* feeding, and *goosey* looking affectionately on, or *vice versa*, it was all very well; but when Neptune took the air in the street of the village or by the road-side, or went to refresh himself in a neighbouring pond, *goosey* would accompany him. Then it was too, that, after enduring the waddle and quack of his admiring companion for a certain period of time, Neptune invariably, as soon as he saw any dogs of condition or puppies of quality coming, put himself into a long trot, and dart round a corner or over a gate, in order to exhibit his dislike of the connexion.

Sir Charles Lydiard felt very much like dog Neptune, when goosey Brag joined him : however, as it was impossible, without rudeness perfectly inconsistent with Sir Charles's character and disposition, to shake him off, he endured the commencement of a conversation, which in the end excited the best feelings of his nature, and awakened in his heart the tenderest sympathy for a much-injured friend.

As the reader will hereafter be referred to this important dialogue, he shall not be troubled with a repetition of it, here : that it *was* important may easily be imagined from the fact, that when Sir Charles reached the door of his hotel he invited Brag to come in, and that they remained in conversation in his drawing-room for more than an hour.

The impression left upon Jack's mind by what he had heard from his "friend" Sir Charles was, that the loss of the widow would neither cause the breaking of the baronet's heart nor of his own head ; and he was, as the reader may imagine, proportionably elated and elevated, and more particularly confirmed in his

original intentions respecting his choice of that lady.

Jack felt as if he were treading on air as he paced down Bond Street to call on some other friend, in order to make a new confidence, no doubt; however, the Fates decided otherwise, for, in turning the corner of Hanover Square, whom should he stumble upon, but Rushton!—a meeting which, as he had magnanimously determined to leave him in the quiet possession of the elegant Blanche, rather pleased him than not. Rushton, whose “affection” for Jack was, if possible, stronger than that of Sir Charles Lydiard, made a desperate attempt to get away from him, not only because upon a general principle he wished to avoid him, but because the impression on his mind was, that ridiculous as the idea might at first appear, *he actually was* the creature for whom Blanche had withdrawn her affections from him, and that if they had much conversation, his temper would get the better of the prudence he meant to adopt until his suspicions were confirmed, and that he might resort to the expedient of kicking

Jack somewhat prematurely. The rencontre was, however, inevitable.

"On your way to the ladies, I presume," said Rushton.

"No," said Jack, "not till the evening; I suppose we shall meet."

"Perhaps not," said Rushton, to whom Jack's air and manner appeared peculiarly pert and vulgar,—and he passed on. Jack turned and kept up with him.

"Strange creatures, the females!" said Jack, perking up his head and smirking.

"They *are*, indeed!" said Rushton, as the thought of Blanche's affection for the burr which was sticking to him, flashed across his mind.

"'Gad, Rushton," said Jack — (Rushton shuddered at the familiarity) — "wonders will never cease! — *you* are a happy man, with such a creature as Blanche Englefield your own."

"That's a sore subject," said Rushton, "and we had better not touch it. I know you are an admirable joker, — but jokes, especially practical ones, not unfrequently turn out ill."

"I know what you are up to," said Jack:—"down upon you in half no time, smack, smooth, and no mistake."

"I dare say you may comprehend my meaning," said Rushton; "but I repeat, that if you do, my present feelings are not to be trifled with; and if you do not, this is neither the time nor place to enlighten you."

"Don't put yourself in a passion," said Jack; "you never were more mistaken in your life."

"Upon what point?" said Rushton.

"About Blanche," replied Brag.

"Really, sir," said Rushton, "you are treading upon very delicate ground. You have entrapped me into a conversation which it was my particular wish and desire to avoid in the present state of affairs; but you have now led me to a point at which I cannot stop. You have alluded to a young lady in the most familiar manner, who, in my opinion, has been exceedingly civil to you, and I really do consider, under the circumstances in which I am

placed, I ought to know exactly the character of your intimacy with her."

"I shouldn't wonder!" said Jack: "it only shows how the longest heads may be puzzled. You'll find out all how and about it, before to-morrow — eh! — are you awake?"

"Awake! — I am," said Rushton, "yet I seem to be dreaming. Do you then admit that your acquaintance with Miss Englefield, whom you so unceremoniously call Blanche, is so near its favourable termination?"

"My dear Mr. Rushton," said Brag, "you are safe — at least, as far as I am concerned: there are more horses in the stable than one — eh! — are you awake now? No? I'll put you out of your pain then — I hate to be cruel; — never am, even to dumb animals, except when I want 'em to stir their stumps a bit. No, no: if anybody in the house has cause for jealousy, it isn't *you*. Will that do for you — eh?"

"What!" said Rushton, "am I to understand that Mrs. Dallington——"

"Mum!" said Brag, bursting to proclaim

his wonderful success — “dumb as a Dutchman : — the widow’s the winner, fifty to one.”

“ You are joking !” said Rushton.

“ Not I,” said Jack : — “ thing settled, snug — smack smooth, and no mistake. I know you don’t half like Sir Charles. I ’ll settle *his* affair : I speak, of course, in confidence — but so it is : — the thing is what the French call a *funny affair.*”

“ Surely, this never *can* be !” said Rushton.
“ What ! after all the declarations I have heard her make — all her regrets that his coldness of manner so much damped her natural affection for him : after——”

“ Lord bless your heart !” said Brag, “ there’s no accounting for females — weathercocks — eh !”

“ I cannot comprehend it,” said Rushton :
“ even had—”

“ Do you believe it ?” said Brag.

“ You say it, Mr. Brag,” said Rushton ; —
“ it must be so.”

“ I ’ll do more,” said Jack : “ we are both

in the same boat, and shall be near connexions."

"Yes," said Rushton, in a tone not expressive of the feelings which the anticipation really excited, "so we shall; — well?"

"Well then," said Jack, "you must keep the secret: — when a female is concerned, a man ought to be as still as a dead horse. I'll show you her own note, — in course, not a word to anybody."

Saying which, he took out his pocket-book, and selected with more than ordinary care the widow's favourable billet. Rushton would have seized it, such was his anxiety to convince himself of the truth of his companion's statement, but Jack would not part with it. Rushton saw it was her writing, and read enough to satisfy himself not only that it was a genuine document, but actually the identical letter which he had seen her despatch in the presence of Sir Charles Lydiard and himself — a fact which, however much it might relieve him from all apprehension of Brag's further interference with his proceedings, was in an

instant coupled in his mind with the circumstance of Blanche having upon the same occasion also sent off a hateful three-cornered note to somebody else. How subtle are the workings of a jealous mind! — one evil overcome, up starts another: one doubt is removed only to make room for its instant successor.

“ You see what she says,” said Brag. “ What d’ye think of Sir Charles now—eh?—*he* hasn’t been awake! That, I think, is a finisher for *him*. I shouldn’t have shown you this, but I know—I am sure, you thought I was beating about after Blanche—and fancied that *she*—eh?”

“ I fancy nothing now,” said Rushton—“ Blanche is all faith and truth!”—(“ Umph!” said Brag, dying, but not daring, to show *her* up too.) — “ But Mrs. Dallington,” continued he—“ well! I have often told Lydiard that he was taking it too easy, and too calmly, and all the return I got was his reproach for being too hasty and too *exigeant* in my demands upon the reason and consistency of women in general. I knew what would happen.”

"Was that since I became acquainted with her?" said Brag.

"Long before," said Rushton: "and as for Blanche," continued he, still 'harping' upon the letter, "mild and amiable as she is, I dare say even *she* deceives me sometimes."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Jack, looking excessively cunning.

"You are a comforter to a doubting man," said Rushton.

"Well, good-bye!" said Jack. "In course, you'll take no notice of what I have said. I think we had better have the double marriage the same day—eh! Mrs. Dallington Brag will sound well. I think I shall startle Lord Tom:—so, mum! as I say:—keep my counsel, and it will all come off smack smooth, right up, straight down, and no mistake!"

Saying which, Brag quitted his wondering companion at the top of Harley Street, to which this dialogue had extended their walk; and darted across the New road to a livery stable, where two or three of his horses, which did *not* belong to him, were standing at livery.

Rushton's feelings were considerably excited by the disclosure which his companion had made. His indignation was roused by the assurance and vanity of the coxcomb, ready to sacrifice the character of a woman who had owned her affection for him, to the gratification of boasting of her good opinion ; while his sympathy was seriously awakened for Sir Charles Lydiard. That he had been, as he had long suspected, made the dupe of a heartless woman, was now a fact incontrovertibly established ; and Rushton considered it his duty to Sir Charles, for whom, however uncongenial their characters and opposed their dispositions might be, he could not fail to entertain a high respect and esteem, to make him acquainted with what he had heard from Brag, — or rather, which was most convincing, that which he had seen in his possession, in order that he might spare himself the needless mortification of receiving a formal dismissal from the widow, as well as to rescue him from a further continuance of a system of hypocrisy and deception, for which, although it was im-

possible not to admit it, it was most difficult reasonably to account.

Naturally enough, these considerations upon Sir Charles Lydiard's affair led to some reflections upon his own. Blanche, the gentle and the mild, was the sister of the woman who had conducted herself with such heartless levity and indelicate duplicity — not only her sister, but her constant associate — her confidante, no doubt. The last pert toss of Brag's empty head had its weight in these calculations : it was most unquestionably to be inferred that there was no great difference between the conduct or character of the two sisters. But what was a hint or innuendo from such a person ? Nothing ! — unless backed up and corroborated by testimony so convincing as that which he had afforded of the widow's levity and fickleness.

Rushton's thoughts, however, still rested on Sir Charles Lydiard. A little more reflection upon the matter strengthened him in his first intention, of imparting all he knew to the worthy baronet — an intention which he more particu-

larly determined to put in practice, inasmuch as a communication between them might elicit something beneficial to both.

Accordingly Rushton proceeded to the hotel at which Sir Charles was living, and found him at home and alone. When he entered the room where he was sitting, he was sensibly struck by an unusual embarrassment in his manner, and a kind of affectionate air in his reception of him. Rushton felt assured that he knew the worst. They sat down; but the difficulty which Rushton naturally experienced in opening the subject uppermost in his mind, was increased by the evident agitation of the baronet. A few commonplace observations, and questions about riding, or walking, or dining, were soon exhausted. At length Rushton asked his friend if he should be at Mrs. Dallington's during the day or evening.

"I think I shall go there in the evening," said Sir Charles, and his voice faltered: — a pause ensued.

"Have you heard from either of the ladies this morning?" asked Rushton.

"No," replied Lydiard, looking earnestly at his friend — "have you?"

"Not I," said Rushton — and then came another pause. "What extraordinary creatures women are!"

"They are indeed, Rushton," said Sir Charles. "Pray, have you happened to meet that most odious of persons, Mr. Brag, in the course of your walk or ride to-day?"

"I have," said Rushton, in a tone much more serious than the subject seemed to require, at the same time fixing his eyes steadily upon the unhappy victim before him.

"He is extremely popular with the women," said Sir Charles, "which strikes me as one of the strongest proofs of the impossibility of comprehending the nature of their minds and tastes."

"It does seem curious," said Rushton, "that anything so vain and so vulgar should have the power to induce women of sense, education, rank, and character, to forfeit all claims to respect and esteem by favouring his pretensions."

"Pray, Rushton, did the fellow make any communication to you?" asked Sir Charles.

"Upon what subject?" said Rushton.

"A very tender and important one," replied the baronet: "indeed, if you had not called, I should have endeavoured to find you before dinner, to have spoken to you upon it."

"Why, he certainly did say something," said Rushton,—"and that something was very important."

"Did he show you a letter?" said Sir Charles.

"He did," replied Rushton.

"Well, then, we can speak without further disguise," said Sir Charles; —"were you not thunder-stricken?"

"It merely confirmed me in my often repeated opinion,—that we know nothing of women," said Rushton.

"You have often told me you thought there was something of the sort going on between them," said Sir Charles; "but I take matters so much more coolly than you do, that, I confess, it appeared to me little else than the com-

mon *bardinage* in which a pretty woman dearly loves to engage."

"Ah! Sir Charles," said Rushton, "it is that very coolness of which you boast that has done all the mischief."

"I don't exactly see that," said Sir Charles. "You will find that I shall bring my young widow into perfect subjection, more especially after this adventure of the chattering Brag."

"After!" said Rushton—"why, my dear Sir Charles, what on earth do you mean? That after the exposure of falsehood and flightiness, delusion and deception, which this fellow has had the good fortune to excite, and has now the vanity to exhibit in the public streets, you would marry Mrs. Dallington, if you could?"

"My dear friend, why not?" said the baronet. "I may, and do, feel deeply for all the results which you enumerate, and agree with you in your surprise that such results should have occurred: it seems perfectly miraculous! — but, however much I may sympathize with

you, there can be no reason why I should give up Mrs. Dallington."

"Did you read the letter Brag received?" said Rushton.

"I did," replied Sir Charles, "twice over—and, I assure you, was exceedingly shocked and amazed."

"My dear Sir Charles," exclaimed Rushton, "are you made of ice?—'exceedingly shocked!'
is *that* a phrase consistent with the discovery of such a proof of infidelity as *this*?"

"What can I say more, Rushton!" said Sir Charles. "You must feel the blow most severely, especially with your vivid imagination and excessive sensibility; but for *me*, I have only to thank my stars that my fair widow is still my own."

"Your own!" cried Rushton:—"what!
after she has accepted Brag!"

"She accept Brag!" said the baronet, opening his eyes rather wider than usual—"no, no—that would be rather too much of a joke!"

"Why, she *has* accepted him!" said Rushton, dashing his hand on the table.

"In your circumstances, Frank," said Sir Charles, "one would not venture to suspect a joke:—but, whatever may have been the indiscretions of the meek and modest Miss Englefield, Mrs. Dallington has, I flatter myself, too much good sense to be betrayed into any such absurdity."

"Why, you told me you had seen the letter," said Rushton.

"So I have," replied Sir Charles, "but most assuredly no letter of her's."

"Whose then?" exclaimed Frank.

"Why," said Sir Charles, "Blanche's letter."

"Letter to whom?" cried Rushton, starting from his chair.

"To her accepted lover, Brag," replied the baronet.

"*Her* lover!" cried, or rather screamed, the infuriate Rushton. "My dear friend, what do you mean?—what does it all mean?"

"I mean merely," replied Sir Charles, "that Mr. Brag was good enough to show me the letter in question, which was written to him by Miss Blanche Englefield, accepting the

offer of his hand,—and that I read it twice over.”

“ Why, then, the world’s at an end, Lydiard !” cried Rushton. “ Blanche false !—Blanche !—Oh ! why was I deceived ?—why was I duped ?”

“ I really don’t know,” said Sir Charles, in a tone which, by the contrast it afforded to the convulsive exclamations of his agitated friend, seemed to imply that he did not very much care.

“ But how do *you* bear it, Sir Charles ?” said Rushton. “ These women are worse than women usually are. He showed me a letter from the widow,—your widow ! Sir Charles,—couched in exactly the same terms.”

“ What !—accepting him ?” said Sir Charles.

“ Upon my honour and life ! yes,” said Rushton. “ What on earth does it mean ? That dear, calm, mild—I shall go mad—raving mad !—Wretch that I am !”

“ Stop, Rushton,” said Sir Charles ; “ follow my advice; sit down, and take rest and comfort.”

“ Comfort !”

“ Yes, comfort,” said the baronet. “ I see

through all this in a moment. While there was but one letter, and one traitress, it was all possible, though not probable; the two settle the affair: — it 's a trick."

" A trick ! my dear Sir Charles," said Rushton — " no, no ! To think that that fair creature should so far forget herself — no, no : — I am sure she never could have written—"

" My dear friend, I saw and read the letter," said Sir Charles, " and I repeat it is all a trick. How could two women, living on the terms upon which Blanche and her sister live, accept the same man in one day ? No doubt, this wretched little creature has been persecuting them with his attentions, and they have undertaken this scheme as the precursor of his unceremonious rejection."

" But why write ?" said Rushton — " why — "

" For the better carrying on of the plot," continued the baronet : — " *you* trust their letters — *I*, their hearts. That very empty coxcombs may, and do, succeed sometimes, is too notorious to be denied ; but here the case is totally different, in my opinion. The fat

knight, in the hands of the Windsor wives, was in a more enviable position than our little steeple-hunter is at this moment in those of one maid and widow."

"Do you really think so?" said Rushton, his rage moderating a little.

"Think!" replied Sir Charles — "consult your own common sense; a moment's reflection proves it."

"Upon my life! I begin to think so too," said Rushton. "But there is one thing which seems to me absolutely necessary, not only to assure us of their good intentions, but to vindicate our own characters and worry them in their turn,— I mean, that whether these notes are or are not intended to entrap and expose Mr. Brag, we should consider them serious, and act upon the information we have received from their adorable imp."

"I shall go to Mrs. Dallington's," said Sir Charles, "this evening, as usual, see how things look, and proceed accordingly."

"Yes, but don't let us believe everything we hear too readily," said Frank.

"What! still jealous—still doubting?" said the baronet.

"No, not that,"—said Rushton, "I will be there too; and while you touch upon the subject, I will watch their eyes."

"The telegraphs again," said Sir Charles.

"Yes, there one may read the language of the heart," said Rushton.

"Leave the management of the affair to me," said Sir Charles: "I can conduct myself more calmly and moderately than some people. Rely upon it, my widow shall not get out of this little manœuvre without some trouble."

"You will not distress her?" said Rushton.

"A woman in tears looks remarkably interesting," said the baronet.

"I love to see her dear countenance drest in smiles," said Rushton, "and I do hope you—"

"We will go this evening together," said the baronet. "See how I conduct myself towards Mrs. Dallington, and if you do not choose to follow my example, at least profit by experience."

"I confess," said Rushton, "I am by no means satisfied; yet all you say—"

"Is all that is to be said on the subject," said Sir Charles. "So now I am at your service for a walk or ride till dressing-time, and, if you have nothing better to do afterwards, for a *tête-à-tête* cutlet at Crocky's; we can there talk over our future proceedings for the evening, and suggest some method of utterly exterminating John Brag, Esq."

"Kicking him first, and shooting him afterwards," said Rushton, "is what I should respectfully recommend."

"Oh! dear no," said Sir Charles, "most assuredly neither the one nor the other; he shall live to amuse us upon some other occasion: without a few tigers and lions, society would be 'flat, stale, and unprofitable.' So, come away, and, I flatter myself, you will see me this evening at Mrs. Dallington's in something very like a new character."

It was under this engagement the friends proceeded on their stroll, Rushton feeling infinitely less at ease than the baronet, who

viewed the affair in its true light, and was fully resolved upon having his *revanche* after his own plan.

What the state of Brag's feelings might have been during the few hours which preceded the deciding visit to the same scene, it is scarcely possible to imagine. Mr. Ducrow can ride two, or even three, horses at once; and some other equally astounding artist is able to dance upon two tight ropes at the same time; but to manage two ladies under the circumstances in which Brag had placed himself, seems to be a task Herculean by comparison with either of the others. A man less conceited and self-assured would either have seen through the trick which they had so justly played upon him, or if he could have imagined the result possible, would have excused himself from accepting the invitation of either lady, when both were for the same night; but Jack took it for granted that he had, as he called it, "knocked them both over," and that, as the "females" were "cunning creturs," each one would so contrive to play her own game, as not to awaken the suspicions of the other.

As the time approached, Johnny made the most careful preparations for dressing. Never was anything so smart and spruce as the dapper cockney in what he called his “ genteel comedy ” dress ; and by nine o’clock he was all ready for the conflict. Circumstances, however, as we shall see, conspired to delay his appearance at the widow’s, and Sir Charles and Rushton arrived before him. It was judged, however, better, for the furtherance of their scheme, that Rushton should not make his appearance in the drawing-room at the same time with his friend ; he therefore made an excuse to the servant, that he wished to write a letter before he went up stairs, and bade him put lights in the library in order that he might do so. Sir Charles proceeded to the drawing-room at once, and found the ladies alone, evidently waiting the arrival of Brag, whose exhibition was not intended by them to have been witnessed by anybody but themselves. Their surprise at the appearance of Sir Charles was, however, speedily changed into a feeling of a very different nature, by finding him colder, more

gloomy, and more reserved than even *he* was usually.

(“Rely upon it,” said Mrs. Dallington to her sister, “Mr. Brag has been blabbing.”)—“My dear Sir Charles, you seem vastly out of spirits.”

“There are circumstances in the world which affect us to such a degree, madam,” said Lydiard, “as to render a concealment of the feelings they excite impossible.”

“To what do you allude, Sir Charles?” said Mrs. Dallington, really concerned at perceiving what she could not doubt to be the successful result of her manœuvre.

“I mean, madam,” said Lydiard, “that a woman who permits the unequivocal attentions of a lover—encourages those attentions—nay, goes the length of admitting her affection for him, and then betrays him and accepts a rival, strikes a blow to his heart, the anguish of which cannot be disguised.”

“Rely upon it,” said Mrs. Dallington, “you have no cause for the grief you describe.”

“I! madam,” said the baronet,—“I am not speaking of myself: no, no—*my* sorrow

and anxiety are excited by a sympathy for my poor friend, Rushton. Oh ! Miss Englefield, what must your feelings be when you know the state of mind to which he is reduced ? He has discovered all. He is aware of the transfer of your affections, and is, as I verily believe — mad !”

“ Mad !” said Blanche.

“ Yes,” said Sir Charles ; “ his feelings, as you well know, are strong—his passions violent. His conduct this afternoon I consider very little short of insanity.”

“ Under similar circumstances, Sir Charles,” said Mrs. Dallington, “ *you* perhaps would not be so violently affected.”

“ Certainly not, madam,” replied Sir Charles ; “ but I can feel deeply for a friend who is. To *my* advice only will he be indebted for a speedy restoration, as I hope, from his alarming state. I have found the means, and I rejoice to know that he has adopted them.”

“ What may they be, Sir Charles ?” said Blanche, her eyes filling with tears.

“ Very simple, and, in my opinion, not

particularly disagreeable," said Sir Charles. "There is a certain Miss Harrington, a most amiable, beautiful girl, who is avowedly in love with him,—Julia Harrington, I think, she is called."

"Y-e-s," stammered Blanche, "I—know—I have seen her—"

"Well," said the baronet, "after what he had communicated to me of your conduct, it appeared to me, that as you had thought proper to reject him in a way so decided as by accepting another gentleman, which—forgive me, if I am wrong—he told me you had done, it was the most judicious thing in the world for him to transfer his affections to the young lady of whose compassion he was perfectly secure, and for whom, I happen to know, he entertains a very high regard, to call it by no other or tenderer name."

"And," said Blanche, "did he take your advice, and fly to her at your suggestion?"

"Not exactly," said Sir Charles; "I had to drive him to her father's house in my cab; and although he certainly resisted at first, I

eventually succeeded in settling him into an invitation to a family dinner with them, where, I conclude, he is now sipping his claret, and making himself acceptable to the fair daughter of the house."

"What on earth shall I do!" said Blanche to herself:—but her ejaculation was not so completely "mental" as to escape the attentive ears of the worthy baronet, who felt his own character change, and his disposition alter, as he witnessed the gradual success of his stratagem.

"I think, Sir Charles," said Mrs. Dallington, who was now convinced that *her* proceedings with Brag were yet unknown to him, "that you might have spent the last few hours of your life more profitably than in separating two fond hearts."

"Fond hearts!" said Sir Charles—"the acceptance of a rival is no particularly strong proof of fondness. No—let him marry where he is loved; and as for myself, Mrs. Dallington, I shall content myself with waiting a little longer for the happiness which, I trust, my friend will shortly enjoy. I hope, madam,

some day to find, like Rushton, a woman who will condescend to love me truly and faithfully. My pretensions, I own, are inconsiderable ; but I have at least the merit of sincerity and honesty. I admit that these are not such striking qualifications as those of Mr. Brag, a preference for whom I am aware you have exhibited, and upon which I have the honour to congratulate both you and myself. I wish you a very good evening, ladies."

Saying which, Sir Charles walked out of the room, leaving Mrs. Dallington and Miss Englefield in a state of stupor and amazement. That Brag should be laughed at by them, and made the subject of a scene which should in the end prove to their lovers the utter contempt they had for the pretender of whom those lovers were both jealous, was, as the reader knows, the main object of their scheme ; but the mean opinion even *they* entertained of the man — if man he may be called — did not induce them to suspect the possibility of his exhibiting their two letters to his rivals.

Their own agitation, and the manner Sir

Charles assumed during the conversation, gave them no opportunity of explaining away the affair, and they sat looking at each other for two or three minutes without speaking, convinced that the anger of Sir Charles was genuine, and the story he had told true; for although it was part of their object, or at least of Mrs. Dallington's, to agitate the feelings of their devoted swains, it was most assuredly not their intention either to drive Sir Charles into old bachelorism, or hurry Rushton into a marriage with Miss Harrington.

"Well," said Mrs. Dallington, "this has somehow taken a wrong turn. I admit that Sir Charles's agitation pleases me; it is what I hoped for;—although certainly I did not think that Mr. Brag was quite so great a monster:—but for *you*, Blanche—"

"I am lost," said Blanche, "for ever! Oh, sister, sister!—why did I lend myself to this scheme? If Rushton marries that Miss Harrington, what on earth will become of me!"

"There it is, Blanche," said Mrs. Dallington; "while you had him all to yourself, you

never were at rest,—always quarreling, always reproaching, always accusing and defending."

"True," said Miss Englefield, "but what are such quarrels? I know his heart—I know his good qualities—I can see his imperfections;—but that I love him sincerely is now my greatest misfortune."

Little did Miss Blanche Englefield think that this most unequivocal declaration of the state of her heart and feelings was clearly and distinctly heard by Mr. Francis Rushton himself, who having, instead of dining at General Harrington's, as Sir Charles had stated, entered the boudoir, in which there was no light, from the staircase, at the moment that his friend was giving his account of the proceedings of the morning, and not venturing to interrupt the thread of a narrative which was to form so important a feature of *their* scheme, had dropped himself quietly into a well-stuffed chair in a corner of the room, where he lay *perdu*, not daring then to make his appearance, which would, of course, overthrow the authenticity of Sir Charles's story; and afterwards

being ashamed of admitting, by presenting himself to the ladies, when the worthy baronet was gone, that he had, under such circumstances, overheard the declaration which had given him such unqualified delight.

"Well," said Mrs. Dallington, "of one thing it assures us, at all events, that however the warmth of the one and the coldness of the other may at times have excited our suspicions of fidelity in one instance, or affection in the other, it is now clearly established that they are both sincerely attached to us."

"And what consolation is that to *me*?" said Blanche — "or how can I ever atone to myself for having, at your suggestion, answered the impertinent note of that odious, foolish creature, Brag? What must Frank think of me? — to prefer such an animal to *him*!"

"Well, but surely, Blanche," said Mrs. Dallington, "Rushton's devotion to *you* cannot have been so entirely exclusive. I have heard him vowing that he would die if you rejected him; instead of which, he immediately sets about making another match the moment he thinks you have cast him off. If he had chosen

to kill himself, you could not help it, you know."

" Oh ! sister, sister," said Blanche, " do not for the world talk of such a thing : — Rushton kill himself for *me* !"

" Yes : it was his course of proceeding," said Mrs. Dallington, " to agitate, excite, and alarm you into loving him. Sir Charles's line with me has been totally different. It is our duty to ourselves to conceal our feelings now, however strong they may be ; our honour demands the sacrifice."

" Honour ! my dear sister," said Blanche,— " honour consists in deceiving no one. As for Rushton, you would at this moment be delighted to find Sir Charles as jealous of *you* as you have often seen *him* jealous of *me*. Miss Harrington has long been attached to him, and now by this silly scheme, as I must call it, I have driven him to return that affection. If he could know the anguish I feel at this moment, he would best know how to appreciate my regard and esteem."

The tears that followed these words were more

than Rushton could bear. His apparent meanness in listening — the certain overthrow of Sir Charles's scheme — every consideration but one was forgotten; and starting from his corner, he rushed into the drawing-room, and in an instant was on his knees before his beloved Blanche.

"I am here!" said Rushton, — "is this enough?"

"Mercy on me! — Mr. Rushton!" cried Blanche.

"What!" said Frank, "did you — could you for a moment believe that I should act as Lydiard has told you I had done? No, no, Blanche! I am at your feet — your slave eternal: my heart — my hand — my fate, are all at your disposal."

"So," said Mrs. Dallington, "Sir Charles Lydiard is the wise manager of this scheme."

"Yes," said Rushton, "he saw through the trick you were playing, which I was mad enough to believe a matter-of-fact."

"And how might *you* have become acquainted with the story?" asked Mrs. Dallington.

"Your double victim," said Rushton, "was so elated by his success, that, in order to relieve Lydiard's weak mind, he showed *him* Blanche's tender billet; and in order to prove what a dupe Lydiard was, he exhibited yours to *me*."

"Was there ever such a detestable wretch upon earth!" said Mrs. Dallington.

"You know he is coming here this evening," said Rushton.

"He shall not be let in," said Mrs. Dallington.

"Oh! yes, by all means let him in," said Rushton. "All care is now banished from our hearts; let us celebrate the happy termination of all our uncertainties by a sacrifice."

"As you like," said the fair widow. "And where is Sir Charles? — is he gone?"

"Not he," said Rushton: "he is in the library, I take it. His scheme is not yet half complete, but he may now spare himself the trouble of working it out."

"I may indeed," said the worthy baronet, entering the drawing-room through the boudoir, where he hoped to have found Rushton still ensconced, and the mystification still in progress.

"They know all," said Rushton.

"As I did before," said Sir Charles. "I was perfectly aware of the character of their proceedings towards our formidable rival, but I am equally satisfied with yourself that we deserved such a return for our doubts of those we so dearly prize. I admit that I have been jealous, from an excess of esteem; Frank has been jealous from an excess of love. It is time to terminate these little bickerings; and if my dear Mrs. Dallington will be content with such a heart as I have to offer, it is hers, entire and undivided."

"This is a very extraordinary proceeding," said Mrs. Dallington. "I am taken entirely by surprise; however, Sir Charles, I know of no great advantage in concealing a generous feeling of attachment which I admit to exist — and so — we will consider of it to-morrow."

"My dear sister," said Blanche, "I began to be very angry with you at one time."

"When you thought you should lose Rush-ton," said Mrs. Dallington. "But I never was much agitated, because I did not give that implicit credit to Sir Charles's history of Julia

Harrington, which you, who were so much more interested, and therefore so much less able to form a just opinion upon it, did ; and I was at all events satisfied, that if your devoted had, in the course of two hours, made up his mind to a new *affaire du cœur*, his *cœur* was not much worth caring for."

" Well," said Sir Charles, " I confess myself happier than I have been for these two years."

At that moment, it being about half-past ten o'clock, the drawing-room door was thrown open, and — " Mr. Brag ! " announced. The effect produced was infinitely greater than the hero of the night himself imagined. The cause of his being so late was this ; — he had anticipated that the " females," each manœuvring in her own behalf, would not only have contrived to find opportunities for separate *têtes-à-têtes*, but that his widow, who, of course, had the control, would so have arranged that there should be no visitors to interrupt them. When he first reached the house, he found Sir Charles Lydiard's carriage at the door. This annoyed him considerably, and he retired for more than

an hour, thinking that the “bore” of a baronet might have dined with his intended, and that he would go early. Upon his return at the latest possible period at which he felt he could with propriety seek admission into so regular a family as Mrs. Dallington’s, there he still found the eternal carriage of Sir Charles Lydiard. In order to show the earnestness of his feelings, and his anxiety to keep his double appointment, he resolved to pay his visit, however inconvenient the presence of other company might be. He grasped the knocker: the thunder resounded through the hall. The door was opened; and after the purgatorial process of mounting the stairs,—there he stood, in the middle of the circle,—“as large,” or perhaps we had better say as small, “as life!”

It is difficult to describe the various sensations created by his appearance—the indignation of the women, or the sovereign contempt of the men, increased tenfold by his vain, dirty, and unprincipled exhibition of the letters. However, although there had been no time for preconcerting any course of behaviour towards

him, it seemed simultaneously to strike the two happy couples, to treat him in that sort of easy, commonplace manner, which might leave him without the slightest suspicion that the whole of the affair was known or understood, and so give him scope for a little of that admirable management with which he used to boast he "carried on the war," and to which, it was evident, he must resort, to maintain his position relatively to his two captives.

" You are late, Mr. Brag," said Rushton.

" Yes," said Brag, " I have been dining with some monsters who sit and drink wine. Upon my life! we had to swallow four or five bottles after dinner, before coffee was ordered : —that I call a bore, and no mistake."

The time to which this description referred had been expended by this exemplary man in walking up and down and round about the neighbouring streets, until he should see the departure of the baronet's carriage. Little did he imagine what had occurred in that very drawing-room during the period of his peregrinations.

"I ought to apologize to *you*," said Brag, addressing himself to the widow, with a look which the other three perfectly understood; — "but Lord Tom had two or three young fellows to dine with him — wanted me to do the honours and be *crowpee*; so I couldn't say no,—for Tommy is a right good fellow, and no mistake, although *some people* don't patronize him."

"I *thought* Lord Tom, as you call him," said Sir Charles, was at Dover."

"Came to town this afternoon, and goes back to-morrow," said Jack, not in the slightest degree abashed or confounded.

Sir Charles whispered something to Mrs. Dallington, which seemed very much to impugn the truth of Jack's statement; during which little *entretien*, Jack drew his chair close to Blanche's, and with a look which nearly destroyed the serenity of the rest of the party, said, in a low tone, "I was determined to be here this evening, let what might happen."

"I appreciate your kindness and consideration," said Miss Englefield.

"I was thinking," said Brag, in that sort of confidential whisper in which all the branches of the Brag family speak nothingnesses to handsome women, in hopes that they may be mistaken for somethings, "that you are too hard upon Rushton. What you say in your note is too severe: give him a trial. There's no accounting for temper. I had a cover hack once,—as pretty an animal as ever stepped,—but his temper was unaccountable bad. Instead of flogging or pulling him, I bore with him, and humoured him,—tried him with a snaffle instead of a curb,—and at last he went as quiet as a lamb."

"What!" said Blanche, assuming the same tone,—"you recommend patience, and advise forbearance!—I scarcely expected this."

"Upon my honour!" said Jack, "you know I *can* mean nothing but what's right up, straight down, and no mistake. I like Rush-ton very much, and, I must say, I do think you don't give him a fair chance. I mean, if that's the cause of your separating—"

"What," said Rushton, "are you talking about me?"

"Nothing you need mind hearing," said Brag. "You," continued he, rising from his seat, and leaning over Rushton's chair,—"you are not like our poor friend the baronet in the next room—he, he, he!—eh?"

"No," said Rushton; "he seems entirely devoted."

"Strange blindness!" said Jack. "But, I say, Rushton,—now that Blanche is gone to join them,—upon my life, I cannot help congratulating you upon that. She is charming; so mild—so gentle—eh! Do *that* off-hand—take my advice—hit the nail on the head—strike while the iron's hot: settle—sign—seal—eh!—black and white, and no mistake."

"I think I shall," said Rushton.

"Blanche, dear," said Mrs. Dallington, "if you have any voice, sing us one of those little things of Rossini's."

"Voice!" said Blanche,—"I have neither voice nor inclination to sing."

"Do!" said Brag, taking her hand affectionately—"delight me! To-morrow I will explain all I said just now."

Blanche turned from him with a shudder, which he mistook for a mark of sensitive affection, and proceeded to the piano-forte, to which, much to her delight, Brag saw Rushton accompany her. It was evident to the conspirators that Brag attributed Mrs. Dallington's proposition for singing to a desire for a few minutes' conversation with *him*, because he knew enough of society to know that a young lady's song is the signal for the general untying of tongues; and that people who have been all the evening sitting as silent as the grave, immediately begin to talk and flirt the moment the music begins. To favour Brag's too palpable design, Sir Charles left Mrs. Dallington's side to make way for the pretender, and joined the happy couple at the piano-forte.

The bait was swallowed—the baronet's vacated place was instantly occupied, and Brag as close as he could be to Mrs. Dallington in a moment. The symphony was luckily long and loud.

"How shall I thank you enough," said Brag, "for your note? It settles my fate:—all done, snug and comfortable. I *could* tell you such a story! — but mum for the present.

How you *can* go on with that most worthy Sir Charles! upon my life you are too bad; —he believes that you are desperately in love with him at this minute—that I know;—and I know more,—that he is desperately in love with *you*: however, he may stay or go, now, just as he pleases. My dear Mrs. Dallington, you have bound me in eternal gratitude:— all will go well—and, by Heavens! I swear—”

“ Sir Charles, Sir Charles!” said Mrs. Dallington, “ do leave those players and singers alone. Mr. Brag is getting so dreadfully tender, that I don’t know what upon earth to do with him. I must have you, if you please, to break the particularity of a *tête-à-tête*, and to play propriety in that corner.”

“ The devil!” said Brag, in more than a whisper—“ what the deuce are you about?”

“ What! is our friend getting particularly animated?” said the baronet.

“ Not particularly, Sir Charles,” said Brag; “ I was merely saying *that*, which, under the circumstances, is mere matter of business, as I conceive. I may be wrong—but I like candour and openness nevertheless, and no mistake.”

This sentiment, expressed in the loudest tone of voice, reached the fair syren and her swain; the lady ceased playing, and the pair burst out into a violent fit of laughing.

"Well," said Brag, who began to get uncommonly angry, "that's civil, considering how things stand at present."

This remark threw Mrs. Dallington and Sir Charles into an equally powerful convulsion of mirth with that of the other couple.

"I can't help laughing at *you*, Lydiard," said Rushton.

"Nor I at *you*, Rushton," said the baronet.

"Well, it is all very good fun, I dare say," said Brag, "but, for *my* part, I see no joke in your laughing at each other: there's not much to laugh about in any of it, if you come to that."

Here the four members of the party all laughed ten times louder than before.

"I am not aware," said Brag, "what you are all so very merry about."

"Why, Mr. Brag," said Blanche, with one of her sweetest looks, "we are all laughing at *you*!"

"At *me*!" said Brag.

"Yes, Mr. Brag," said the widow;—"when gentlemen choose to write duplicate love-letters to two sisters, and then show their answers to the two gentlemen to whom these ladies are engaged, don't you think the affair, when discovered, becomes rather ridiculous?"

The laugh which followed this question was so loud, that the voice of the servant, who announced supper,—a light and social meal to which the agreeable widow was strongly addicted, and to which her favourite guests were always specially invited,—could scarcely be heard.

"What!" said Brag, "have you been hoaxing me? Why, this is too bad!"

"Not at all, Mr. Brag," said the lady of the house. "Had the conduct of either my sister or myself been such as to encourage your pretensions, we might have excused your addressing either of us; but when you undertake to make two proposals at once, the pity we might have been inclined to feel for your blindness is turned into a sentiment which, as supper is waiting, I will not stop to describe.

Come, Sir Charles, give me your arm ; Mr. Rushton, take care of Blanche. We are going to supper, Mr. Brag. Good evening !”

“ Good evening, Mr. Brag !” said Blanche, making a low curtsey to the astounded little man.

“ Good night, Mr. Brag !” said Sir Charles, bowing formally.

“ Brag, good night !” said Rushton, nodding to him familiarly ; and the happy quartett went laughing down stairs to their symposium, leaving Mr. John Brag as cold as ice and as white as a sheet, standing on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire-place, transfixated, as it were, to the spot. The world was at an end ! His eyes rested upon the marquetry and the buhl, and the ebony and the ivory, and the Sevres and the Dresden, and the large looking-glasses, and the Louis-Quatorze tables,—all of which he had, half an hour before, considered his own goods and chattels ; and there he would have stood till “ morning’s dawn,” had not one of the footmen, more considerate than the rest, gone up to him and asked him if he should

call a cab for him, for that it had set in a very wet night.

It was all too true! — this appeal awakened him from his dream. He declined the offer, took his hat, and descended the staircase to the hall; passed the door of the library where the supper had been served; heard the clatter of plates, and the peals of mirth which were doubtless ringing at his cost, and stepped from the door of his lost paradise into a thick mizzling rain with a sharp wind, which drifted right into his blanched face, saturated his thin shoes, and made him as bodily miserable as he was mentally unhappy.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER this most disagreeable ejection, the character of which might be well expressed in the words which Mr. Kane O'Hara has put into the mouth of the kicked-out-of-Heaven Apollo, who calls his expulsion from the higher regions and his fall to earth, "a pretty decent tumble!" it may naturally be supposed that our sprightly friend, Jack, was rather out of sorts. As he baffled the wind which drove the sharp rain peppering into his eyes, new lights seemed to burst upon him; and in recalling to mind the whole course of his proceedings with the ladies, "trifles light as air," came one after the other to his recollection, which, coolly and calmly combined, tended to exhibit himself *to himself* in anything but a favourable point of view.

He began all at once to perceive that the lovers as well as the ladies had all along been playing upon him ; and the idea that both of them should have accepted him seemed, in the midst of the soaking shower, an absurdity only to be equalled by his having himself made the double proposal. In fact, it is quite curious, as a matter of natural history, to consider the extraordinary effects produced upon the pretender by the wretchedness of his present position ; and one might have hoped that such an exposure, and such a degradation, would have cured his affectation and pretension for ever :— but no. As soon as the next day dawned and the sun again shone, Jack's despondency was at an end, and his natural disposition for bouncing rather sharpened than checked by the desire he now felt of showing how little he cared for his late disaster, and how much better he could do for himself now that he was freed from his self-imposed fetters.

It nevertheless suggested itself to him, that it would be wiser and more prudent to choose another sphere of action ; for, besides having a

better chance of success, it would remove him for the present from the town which held the ladies and their lovers, with all or any of whom he felt a meeting for the next few weeks would be extremely disagreeable.

In casting about for a retreat, he recollect ed that Lord Tom, as Sir Charles had truly said, was staying at Dover; and as that circumstance would secure him a friend, and probably some introduction into society there, he determined upon following his noble friend thither forthwith; and therefore upon his often-tried principle of figuring in print amongst the great and gay, he caused his portmanteau and bag to be deposited at a hotel in the vicinity of his town "plate," at which he slept that night, and at the door of which the Branch Coach of the Dover Union, would call for him the next morning, and convey him to The Bricklayers' Arms, with the certainty that he would, on the second day after his arrival on the coast, find amongst the "fashionable departures" in the fashionable

London newspapers, the words — “ Mr. Brag, from Pumpkin’s Hotel, for Dover.” It would have been easier to have slept at his lodgings at Kennington, and hired somebody to carry his baggage from his “ little place in Surrey ” to the Kent Road — but no : — then he must have been at the expense of paying for the announcement of his own removal, whereas by his present arrangement he got *that* gratis, and flourished at the hotel for a few hours for less money than the insertion would have cost him, had he adopted the other means.

At one time, soon after his father’s death, Jack made an attempt at popularity amongst the sicklies at Cheltenham, and contributed to one or two public charities, and two or three private subscriptions for distressed objects. Upon these occasions he regularly transmitted his donation to the printer of the newspaper, with directions to deduct the charge of inserting his name and liberality in the columns of his “ widely circulated ” journal, and hand the balance of whatever he enclosed to the

charity : — for instance, one pound for the subscription, and five-and-twenty shillings for advertising his benevolence three times.

This ostentatious virtue has a parallel in an anecdote recorded, falsely or correctly, I know not which, of a late celebrated dissenting preacher, who, upon the occasion of visiting a family reduced to a dreadful state of poverty, found the father of four or five starving children shirtless in bed ; his necessities having driven him to sell his last remaining garment. A sight like this, could not fail to move so exemplary a man : he desired the children to quit the room, and forthwith divested himself of the shirt he himself wore, to “ cover the nakedness ” of the emaciated sufferer. This being done, the children were called back, and bid by their parent to go on their knees to the pious minister, who had deprived himself of his own garment to comfort their father. They did so ; they wept for gratitude,—and they did more : all four of them went,—one east, one west, one south, and one north,—and proclaimed the excellence of the pastor ; and when he quitted the house which he

had adorned by his presence, women, standing at their doors, bent lowly before him, and pointed him out to the babes in their arms, whom he blessed; and when their husbands came home from work the story was told, and repeated, until at length it reached the "public," who joined in the praise and admiration, which soon became general. What would they have said or thought if they had known that this saintly person, who had won all their love and gratitude, had, in order to produce the desired effect, put on, before he left home, the particular shirt which he thus sacrificed *over the one that he actually wore!*

It might be thought an ill compliment to one of the parties, to make a comparison between this departed worthy and Jack Brag; but if the history be a true one, there is not much to choose between them. Jack however found, that with all his much-spoken-of benevolence, he could gain no solid advantage by conciliating the affections of a maiden lady, whose fortune he knew to be considerable, and who was of a most charitable turn of mind, and he

therefore quitted Cheltenham nearly as much discomfited as he now found himself on his departure from London — only the retirement in that case had been altogether voluntary. In his last failure his exit was far less qualified, and, in truth, he felt very much like the gentleman who in ancient verse says —

“ Perhaps it was right to dissemble her love ;
But why did she kick me down stairs ?”

The journey to Dover is not one which requires much space for detail, although scarcely a road out of London affords more striking evidence of the wealth and importance of the British metropolis. The frequent glimpses of the majestic Thames, bearing on his ample breast a daily fleet of countless vessels, and which especially strike the foreign traveller just on leaving Milton, where the expansive reach of the Upper Hope first catches the eye,—are full of beauty and interest.— The verdant fields and “ hedge-rows green,” with the hop-gardens in full bloom, clustering even more gracefully than the boasted vine, afford a delightful contrast to the wide waste of *la belle France*, which,

perhaps, one has just left ; while, as far as comforts go, the inns at Rochester, Sittingbourne, and Canterbury, afford all that can be desired, at least to those who can afford to deaire them.

Amongst the mutations of fashion, few appear to be so reasonable as that by which Dover (the “*Clavis et repagulum totius regni;*” as Matthew Paris calls it) has become a place of favourite resort for the best society. It combines a great variety of attractions, and, as long as England continues at peace with France, the daily intercourse between the two countries produces a constant activity, and a change of visiters every twenty-four hours, for the enlivenment and amusement of those who take up their residence in it for the season.

“ No promontory, town, or haven, in Christendom is so placed by nature and situation, both to gratify friends and annoy enemies, as this town of Dover. No place is so settled to receive and deliver intelligence for all matters and actions in Europe from time to time ; no town is by nature so settled either to allure

intercourse by sea, or to train inhabitants by land, to make it great, rich, fair, and populous; nor is there in the whole circuit of this famous isle, any port, either in respect of security or defence, or of traffic or intercourse, more convenient, needful, or rather of necessity to be regarded, than this of Dover."

So sayeth Sir Walter Raleigh, in his memorial to Queen Elizabeth; and if that much-injured worthy were alive to see his favourite town at this period, he would be quite satisfied that his successors in this transitory world have ably worked out his principle. The people of the present day are assiduously continuing their improvements under the sanction of the illustrious Lord-Warden. Nor are the improvements in the port and harbour the only testimonies of its flourishing condition; squares, gardens, streets, rows, crescents, parades, esplanades, and terraces, are rising from the beach, and form a delightful contrast to the business-like appearance of the thickly-thronged pier, and the London-like gaiety of Snargate, with all the attractions of Muddle's and Mummetry's.

In this agreeable *locale* was John Brag, Esq. deposited at a quarter before seven o'clock; and having caused himself to be set down at the corner of a lane leading up to one of the best houses in the place, he called a little boy with a ragged jacket and well-tarred trowsers, to carry his portmanteau and bag to one of the smallest hostceries in the town, which stands in Church Street, and rejoices in the sign of "The Three Mackerels," at which "hotel" Brag proposed to occupy an apartment at the very top of the house,—for the benefit of the air.

The first desideratum in mechanics is the production of the greatest possible power in the smallest possible space; and the attainment of this advantage, in a moral point of view, was the ever-present object of Jack's ambition; that is to say, to make as much show as possible at the least possible expense: — for Jack, in the outset of his feverish efforts at settling himself in good society, had disbursed so largely, that it had become a matter of prudence, if not of necessity, to "shave close." Several of his greatest friends were his largest debtors;

and Lord Tom Towzle, as has been before hinted, had not unfrequently availed himself of Jack's anxiety to oblige. Having, in two or three instances, discovered that either the well was dry, or that the pump would not work, his lordship had latterly given up soliciting the aid of his lively acquaintance, but at the same time had evinced less desire for the advantages of his agreeable society. Jack, however, who was one of the regular cur tribe, who sneak back to the vulgar great upon the "cut and come again" principle, resolved, if he could not get his principal out of the penniless lordling, to take his interest in the way of introductions to good company ; and so, like Sinbad's old man, he took the earliest opportunity of mounting his lordship the next morning.

After a night, not blest with the most soothing dreams, Jack rose from his bed, dressed, and descended from his eyrie, resolved to find Lord Tom in time for his morning meal ; and having discovered a back entrance to the alehouse in which he had stowed himself away, he proceeded by that route to the "Ship" inn, where,

he guessed—and, as it turned out, correctly—his noble friend was staying :—and there, as he proposed, surprised, not altogether agreeably, his noble friend in the act of sitting down to breakfast.

“ Why, Brag,” said his lordship, “ what the deuce has brought you here? Where’s the widow? Has Lydiard shot himself?—or have you shot him, and bolted ?”

“ None of it,” said Brag :—“ no—that game’s up :—cut the connexion altogether, smack, smooth, and no mistake. Lydiard may have her—win her and wear her for his pains. Rather too cunning for me—can’t bear forwardness—eh!—you take. I value nothing that does not require some hunting after.”

“ What! —then you have abandoned her,” said Lord Tom; “ left her mourning! —hard-hearted Jack !

‘ Sick with desire, and seeking him she loves,
From street to street the raving Dido roves.
So when the watchful shepherd from the blind,
Wounds, with a random shaft, the careless hind,
Distracted with her pain, she flies the woods,
Bounds o’er the lawn, and seeks the silent floods
With fruitless care; for still the fatal dart
Sticks in her side, and rankles at her heart.’ ”

"There it must stick," said Jack — "that's all I know. I'm off there: I have seen enough of that house and its inhabitants:—old birds are not caught with chaff—eh! No, no—I know enough of the females to take care of myself."

"Come," said Lord Tom, "sit down, and eat: my notion is, that starving is good for no complaint. Keep your heart up by keeping your stomach full; so, now

"Rebellion's dead and let us go to breakfast."

Brag needed no more pressing invitation to do ample justice to the substantial repast which was placed before him; and his exertions in the way of replenishing afforded very satisfactory evidence that he was not pining for the loss of his "ladye-love," and that his indifference was genuine and sincere.

"All the world here," said Lord Tom — "not a house to be had — people you know by dozens. How long do you stay?"

"Never pin myself to time," said Jack — "as long as I find it pleasant. Have about fifteen invitations to different places in the country:—can't cut myself into bits—go to as

many as I can. This fish is uncommon good — eh ! — fresh out of the water, and no mistake."

" How's your mother, Jack ?" said Lord Tom.

" Can't say," said Jack ; " haven't seen her since the ' Bridge ' day."

" Then you don't know whether she has forgiven you ?" said his lordship.

" Oh ! she's like me," said Brag, " she don't bear malice. I dare say it's all right, up and straight down, and no mistake, by this time. Talking of that,— are there any likely females for a matrimonial concern here ?"

" Why," said his lordship, " I have been here so short a time, that I can't present you with a list ; but in the afternoon the band will play on the Parade, and we'll go and see the turn-out. You still stick to the marrying line ?"

" Yes," said Jack, " when I can see one to suit. I'll have another cup of tea, my lord," continued he. " I say— talking of suiting— just look there — of course tiled, as I say :—

read *that*, and then, I think, you won't wonder at my cutting the widow."

Saying which, the generous gentleman, the *kickee* of the family, tossed the accepting letter of Mrs. Dallington across the table to his lordship, for his perusal and edification.

"Well," said Lord Tom, "what in the world would you have? — here is consent, or the deuce is in it. I don't see exactly how you could get out of the business after this."

"I tell you, my lord, I cut and run," said Jack. "What I saw the evening before last, when I went, settled it. I took my hat and walked — wouldn't even stop to supper: — a regular turn off."

"What *did* you see," said Lord Tom.

"Mum!" said Jack, "that never passes my lips. Where the female sex is concerned, honour is everything. I know you wouldn't wish me to say more: the thing's over now, and there's an end: but if I do marry, rely upon it, neither Mrs. Dallington nor Miss Englefield shall visit my wife: that's all: — *entree nows*, as the French says, and no mistake."

"Well, I am sorry to hear this," said Lord Tom ; "for although, somehow, I was never a favourite there, I had the merit of introducing you to them, and I wish the acquaintance had been more satisfactory. I suppose they will take up with their long-dangling lovers."

"Perhaps yes," said Brag, putting his finger to his nose — "perhaps no : that's no affair of mine. All *I* mean to say is, the ladies are 'much of a muchness,' as *I could* show you — only, as *I* say, honour's the thing, and no mistake."

"I believe, Jack," said Lord Tom, "you have a great deal to answer for. What's gone with the unfortunate victim of your success whom we met in Regent Street?"

"Hang me if I know!" said Jack. "Poor girl! I sometimes do think of *her*. Wouldn't do now for a wife—but—else—nice little thing in her way."

"Didn't you say she was somehow connected with you?" said Lord Tom.

"Yes, distantly—very distantly," said Jack, wondering in his own mind when he had ever

been sufficiently candid, or drunk, to have admitted the connexion in any degree whatever : “ her brother, the Major, married a relative of mine.”

“ I think it is rather lucky,” said Lord Tom, “ that her brother, the Major, does not take it into his head to make some enquiries upon the subject of the affair.”

“ He’s abroad,” said Jack ; “ besides — all snug — never suspected. Her mother wonders why I have cut them, no doubt : — out of my line — can’t keep on visiting : — one thing at one time, eh ! different at another, you know. Don’t mean to marry her, eh ! — a little too late, eh ! — all that sort of thing.”

Lord Tom, since the affair of the “ Bridge ” appointment, and the disclosures which the respectable Mrs. Brag had thought proper to make upon that occasion, began to grow a little more suspicious of his friend’s strict adherence to the truth than he previously had been ; but as he was bound to countenance him as long as he remained in society, by his pecuniary obligations to him, he resolved to keep

secret all the facts which had come to his knowledge, but at the same time more attentively to watch his future proceedings: indeed, the matter of Mrs. Dallington's note which he exhibited, combined with Brag's manner in describing his own indignation and disgust, had the effect of rather unsettling his mind upon *that* business, and he resolved to write to somebody in town for a correct version of the break-off, which, under the circumstances, could not fail to create a sensation in—as everybody calls his own circle—“the world;” Lord Tom thinking, that if Jack were convicted of romancing at the expense of the characters of all the men and women with whom he was permitted to associate, it would be absolutely necessary to shake him off, and leave him to any legal remedy he might think fit to adopt for the recovery of the money he had borrowed of him, which his lordship quite well knew he had lent as a consideration for any good offices which he might be able to do for him in the way of patronage.

After the discussion of breakfast, my lord

and his little-expected tiger began their perambulations. The Pier was visited, although the freshness of the breeze kept the "females" from that delightful promenade. In the course of their walk they encountered a certain Sir James Gunnersbury, an old artillery officer of Lord Tom's acquaintance, who with the greatest warmth and cordiality invited his lordship to dine with him that day *sans façon*, if he happened to be disengaged.

The critical moment had arrived, and Jack, who heard the invitation given, actually shook with apprehension as to the course his noble friend might think fit to pursue; his delight was great, however, when he heard his noble patron hesitatingly decline the bidding on the score of being engaged to "his friend, who was on a visit to him for a few days." The truth was, that Lord Tom had no great inclination to accept the invitation, and rather wished to back out upon the plea of being tied to his visiter. The gallant officer, however, was quite resolved to have him, and entreated his lordship to do him the favour to present him to his compa-

nion, in order that he might express his wish that *he* also would honour him and Lady Gunnersbury with his company.

To Jack this was the most agreeable thing in the world ; and if it had not been so, it would have been extremely difficult to evade it. Brag looked at his lordship, who made no sign of either a negative or an affirmative character, and accordingly his " friend " bowed, rather awkwardly, and said he should be most happy : and the affair being settled, Sir James, " his pig-tail fluttering in the wind," made the best of his way home to the house which he and his family occupied in the Parade.

" Rather a nuisance," said Lord Tom, after he had taken his departure : " deuced dull his parties in town :—Lady Gunnersbury, the greatest bore on earth—and two daughters, who sing all night ; a remarkably slow coach of a son,—and not a particularly good cook. However, we may see something to amuse us."

" Daughters !" said Brag : " rich—eh ?"

" Poor as church mice, I take it," said his

lordship, “ and no beauties :—fancy themselves blue.”

“ Blue !” said Jack—“ what an odd notion.”

“ Very odd, indeed,” replied Lord Tom ; “ but they talk—as you will hear. All I hope is, it is not a mere family party—for we shall die of the blues ourselves if it is.”

Brag, who was too happy at the idea of opening a new connexion, now that he saw his noble friend’s kindness of manner towards him, began to wish that he had at once proceeded to “ The Ship,” instead of having studied economy so deeply as to ensconce himself in a minor and obscure house of entertainment ; — it would be so much more convenient—so much more agreeable — and he could then be continually with his noble friend :—but now the great difficulty, in his small mind, was how to get his portmanteau and bag conveyed from “ The Three Mackerels” to the leading hotel of the place. This required considerable dexterity to manage, but at last his genius triumphed ; and having got into his apartment, he sent for a fly, in which he deposited his property ; and

having driven to the hotel, paid the fly-driver his fare, and dismissed him without permitting him to exchange a syllable with any of the waiters, or ostlers, or porters near, which might have the effect of enlightening them as to the "place from whence he came :" such pains and trouble did he always take, to seem to be, that which he was not, nor ever could be.

Upon this special occasion he was remarkably unfortunate ; for although he had managed so much of the affair as has just been described, he was not destined to sail out of it altogether with flying colours. It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when some gay friends of Lord Tom's had just arrived at the "Ship," whence they were to start for Calais in the morning, to whom his lordship had just introduced our hero, and the coffee-room was thickly peopled with persons of certain consideration, when a waiter advanced to Jack, who was laying down the law about some horse that was to run at Doncaster in a somewhat authoritative tone, and told him a young woman wished to speak to him.

" Hallo ! Jack," said Lord Tom — " what ! at your old tricks already ! — more fascinations — no time lost. Where is she ?"

" At the door, my lord," said the waiter.

" I'll come this moment," said Jack. " 'Pon my life ! I don't know what it means."

" By Jove ! but we'll see," said his lordship ; and accordingly he and the two or three men of his group who perceived that they might presume a little upon the goodnature of their new acquaintance Brag, rushed out into the hall, where stood before them on the steps, a poor wretched-looking girl, wearing black stockings, a cracked chip bonnet, a begrimed gown, and a dirty green baize apron.

The moment the horrid vision met Brag's eyes, he recognized it : — it was the one sole, solitary she-servant of the pot-house he had so skilfully abandoned.

" Oh ! sir," said the girl, — " I beg your pardon, — but missus found your nightcap and comb in the attic after you were gone — so she bid me run and bring them to you."

" Where do you come from, my dear ? "

said Lord Tom, with a killing gravity of countenance.

“ ‘ The Three Mackerels,’ ” said the girl, “ where that little gentleman in the white cords slept last night.” Saying which, she produced the articles in question,— the cap not bearing quite the lily-hue, and the comb, unclean as it was, being somewhat scant of teeth.

The expression of Jack’s countenance at the moment this exhibition took place was beyond description wretched. The friend and associate of Lord Tom Towzle—the companion of peers and dandies — to be the owner of two such objects!—as the French say; and that those *objets* should have been transmitted to him from the “ attic ” of “ The Three Mackerels,” where he “ had slept the night before !”

But the worst was not yet over:— what was he to do with the cap and comb, now that he had gotten them?— for he had, almost unconsciously, taken them into his possession:— Throw them away he could not; deny them he dare not, — for, upon the edge of the cap, the letters B, R, A, G, were marked in red silk

capitals. Must he “quit the gay throng,” and carry them himself up to his present dormitory? —or must he spread the history of the affair still more, by handing them over to a waiter or a chambermaid to deposit them there for him?

The laughter which this incident provoked it was impossible for the spectators entirely to conceal; and the fact that it elicited, as to the “*venue*” of Jack’s last night’s lodging, did not at all decrease Lord Tom’s suspicions that his friend was habitually disposed to justify his possession of the name in which he rejoiced.

Brag thought, and thought wisely, that the best thing he could do was to, what he called “cut and run;” and so if he could not check the mirth which the exposure of his weakness had excited, he might at all events escape the misery of bearing it ringing in peals round his devoted head; accordingly, grasping the night-cap and comb, and devoutly wishing both of them midway between Calais and Dover, or anywhere else in the world but where they were, he bounded up stairs to his newly-acquired apartment.

Had so miserable an animal as a punster been present at Brag's sudden departure, there would have doubtlessly been sundry criminalities committed in the way of quibbles, about Brag's being armed *cap-a-pied* but not *comb-il-faut*, or some such nonsense; luckily, however, the audience and spectators were well-bred, well-dressed gentlemen, and disdained a joke with as much sovereign contempt as if they could have made one themselves. They looked at each other ; those with moustachios twisted their whiskers — those with none, rubbed their foreheads ; and all of them turned involuntarily to Lord Tom, as the sun of the sun-flowers, in hopes of ascertaining who the little gentleman in the white cords was, who had just run up stairs with part of his bed-room furniture from the sign of "The Three Mackerels."

Lord Tom was a man of the world, as the reader may naturally believe : by his manner he repudiated any intimate acquaintance with Jack ; proclaimed him an excellent rider, light weight, and up to any hounds ; and further announced his intention of taking him over

to Paris, to "astonish the natives" in the Champ de Mars by carrying off all the prizes at the races on the following Sunday, to the infinite dismay of the sporting world of that lively city. His lordship accompanied this account of his obsequious friend with an indescribable look, which left his lordship entirely exonerated from any responsibility on the score of his manners or habits, and gave a tone to the character of the *liaison* between them, in the smallest degree flattering to the vulgar coxcomb who had recently escaped.

When the hour of dressing for dinner approached, Brag "showed" again—the coast was then clear; but Lord Tom, if he had not very much desired to benefit himself by Jack's only available accomplishment on the turf, and had not moreover felt conscious of the "debt of honour, which must be paid," would most gladly have either persuaded him not to accompany him to General Gunnersbury's, or to permit him to send an excuse on account of a sudden attack of spasms—a raging tooth-ache—or any other of those "ills which flesh is

heir to," and which, as Dr. Short told Mr Brown in India, make no external show; but Jack would not give his lordship the slightest chance or opportunity to get off the engagement.

It was just as the clock was striking seven that Lord Tom and his squire proceeded on foot, enveloped in cloaks to screen themselves from the effects of a regular gale of wind across the bridge, and pursued their way along the coast, making first for Mrs. Dutsell's baths, and thence taking a fresh departure for the great bombardier's hospitable mansion on the Parade—a perfect silence having been observed by both parties as to the episode of the cap and comb, any reference to which, Lord Tom knew would be unpleasant to his companion, and the particulars of which he thought it most judicious not to touch upon, since, as the reader knows, his lordship meant to make use of Jack on the race-course.

When the visitors entered the drawing-room, Lord Tom was horror-struck and Jack delighted at finding a large party already assembled, amongst whom were several people whom he

knew, and some few whom he did not know ; however, the body consisted of not less than fourteen persons, who were destined to be crammed into a dining parlour, licensed, by size, not to carry more than ten inside.

Jack was presented to Lady Gunnersbury, who did not hear his name, and subsequently to the two young ladies—young by courtesy—upon whom Jack, very shortly after the performance of the ceremony of introduction, began to play off some of his most insinuating tricks. The way in which the tall, gaunt damsels looked at him, most forcibly reminded Lord Tom, who was watching his progress, of the regards of mingled curiosity and surprise with which the Brobdignagian virgins considered Gulliver; Jack, however, nothing daunted, went off at score ; and during the dreadful quarter of an hour before dinner, when the company were as cold and as stiff as wax-work, Jack's voice was specially audible. When, however, dinner was announced, the unfortunate interference of precedence with pleasure threw him out, and he found himself last, and “least,”

except young Gunnersbury, to quit the drawing-room, the fair ladies of the party being appropriated to persons having ascertainable rank, and *he* left next what he called the “crowpee,” with the back of his head exposed not only to the draughts of wind from the sea, which found their way through the hall, but to certain thumps and bumps of the door of the room itself, whenever it was necessary to open or shut it.

The “crowpee” was, of course, young Gunnersbury; and Jack’s left-hand neighbour was a German baron, who spoke no English. The heir of the house was particularly fine; and even if he condescended to notice any of the stray guests whom his father was in the habit of inviting, while they were actually at table, made a point of cutting them dead, if he met them anywhere else the next day. He took ‘an inveterate aversion at first sight, from Jack and his curls and studs, and never deigned even to look at, much less to speak to him, throughout the rest of the dinner: Jack’s position was therefore not particularly enviable.

To describe accurately Lady Gunnersbury’s

character and conversation is, I apprehend, beyond the reach of pen. The old lady, who neither looked, nor, it is to be presumed, felt old, lived in a state of perpetual anxiety to talk to everybody near and about her, upon every subject which they might be discussing, being at the same time most punctilioiusly, or rather pesteringly, civil and attentive to her guests, especially at dinner. This assiduity was derived from the age and mode in which she had been educated ; and her evident anxiety to talk with everybody about everything arose from the circumstance of her having once been deaf for several years together, of which infirmity, Time, or some successful aurist, had cured her. It was her desire to show not only that she was no longer deaf, but that she could hear half a dozen things at once, and reply to them all, that produced an effect of which I despair of being able to convey even a faint idea.

On the right hand of her ladyship, who assumed the head of the table, sat the Earl of Dullingham ; on the left, Lord Tom, next to

whom the Countess was placed, on the right hand of Sir James Gunnersbury, on whose left was Mrs. Carnaby; next to her was seated a Mr. Paddle, and between him and the "crowpee" Mr. Carnaby. Next the earl, on the other side of the table, was the elder Miss Gunnersbury; and between her and her sister Sir Henry Rockly. Next to the younger miss was deposited the German baron; and between the baron and the "crowpee," Brag.

Seated and settled, and the soup discussed, the conversation became general, but not universal. The neighbours who were acquainted with each other began to chat; the Earl and Maria—the Countess and Sir James—Lady Gunnersbury and Lord Tom—Rockly and Eliza—Paddle and Mrs. Carnaby—Carnaby and young Gunnersbury;—but Brag and the Baron were basketed. Had Brag been placed next either of the girls, he flattered himself, from the play he had made up-stairs, and the way in which his little attentions had been received, that he should have got on remarkably well, and no mistake; but being hedged in between two men, one of

whom could not, and the other of whom would not, speak, was anything but smack smooth, straight up and right down, in his opinion.

When the Babel-like noise of the jovial party was at its height, Lady Gunnersbury began to be in her glory : in every dialogue she must have a word — in every tête-à-tête discussion an interference ; and in something like this fashion did she continue one incessant gabble of confusion, such as could not well have been worse confounded.

“ My dear Lord, take some of these cutlets. — I think so, Mrs. Carnaby ; always said she was beautiful ; dresses so well.—Done with sauce à la Soubise.—I ’m glad you like Dover, Lord Thomas ; the pier is so charming — so fine and clear in a morning-walk. — Looks so well in that pretty pink bonnet, Mrs. Carnaby. — Thank you, I ’ll take the sweet : limit myself to two glasses at dinner. — Capital invention, — four thousand gallons in a minute ! — Very full, just now. — Maria, what will you have, dear ?—you eat nothing.—Wonderful accumulation of shingle. — As you say, Sir Henry,

what a man Shakespeare was!—dear, dear!—quite a wonder rising in that dark age.—Striped red and white, was it, Mr. Paddle?—I love balloons.—Sir Walter Raleigh wrote it, my lord: I heard you ask Maria. I forget how many plays he wrote—fifty-two, I think. What a shocking thing to cut his head off, my lord, after all that time—wasn't it?—A blue body with red wheels—I heard you tell Sir James about the coach.—So superior to any writer of his time.—With morocco squabs.—A little bread-sauce, if you please.—From Lord Mackdaudle's place in Scotland; always sends us plenty.—Tremendous sight the parachute, as you say.—Come in boxes once a week. I don't think it quite so good as his last.—I heard your opinion of Captain Marryat's book; one of our very best writers.—Meyer and Miller make for Sir James: you were asking my son, Mr. Carnaby, about shoemaking.—In three volumes, with plates—And a little of the *fondù*.—We get it from the library.—Eliza, dear, Mr. Paddle wishes to drink wine with you. Different place this from Paris, Mr. Paddle.—With a shift-

ing rumble, Sir James, if you please.—Won't Baron Bumbeltronden take *fondu*? You speak German, Eliza, ask the baron; I don't: I am no great linguist. I am very much of the opinion that one tongue is sufficient for one woman."

"Especially, my dear," said Sir James, "if, like Dr. Johnson's memorable sheep's tail, it be long enough."

Under the heavy fire of my lady's eloquence, the dinner proceeded as dinners usually do. Jack had not opened his lips, except to put the viands and wines of his gallant host into his mouth; and although Lord Tom supported him by asking him to drink wine with him, young Gunnersbury devoted himself entirely to Carnaby, to whom, when he did speak, he spoke in an under-tone, keeping, as it were, aloof from all the guests excepting the Earl and Countess, to whom he was obsequiously polite, and Sir Henry Rockly, to whom he was remarkably civil. Sir James, however, called upon Jack to do him a similar favour to that which he had done Lord Tom; but in inviting him to the social intercourse, he unfortunately

called him Mr. Bag, instead of Brag, which excited some attention, caused a slight whispering, and excited a few titterings.

There is always in women a goodness of feeling towards those whom they imagine to be ill at ease with themselves; a kind of pity certainly not akin to love, but which shows itself in an anxiety to "make things agreeable." This sort of sentiment both the young ladies entertained towards Brag: they saw how perfectly uncomfortable he was, and Eliza, who was nearer to him than her sister, after ineffectually telegraphing her brother to be civil to the stranger, put herself sufficiently forward to afford him a gracious look, which encouraged him to suggest a glass of champagne. Had he seen the expression of young Gunnersbury's countenance while this ceremony was in progress, it would have turned his Silleri into prussic acid: the frown he bestowed upon his sister the first time their eyes met after it was over, even more distinctly marked his high mightiness's entire disapproval of the whole proceeding.

According to Brag's calculation, they had sat at least five hours after dinner before Lady Gunnersbury, whose incessant volubility it would be impossible to follow, at least with any chance of catching it, until at length that exemplary lady at once delighted and astounded him by announcing the retreat of the ladies.

" Dear Lady Dullingham, I am ready," said the hostess. " *I see, Sir James;* hate the custom nevertheless—separating after dinner.—I hear you, Sir Henry: with a band of music and a cold collation, I agree; but in England.—Oh, fie! Mr. Paddle, that is really ungallant — unlike you.—In a barge by moonlight; don't do so in Paris, Sir Henry.—What Eliza says is quite right; but such a bad singer: however, we must bow to custom, Lady Dullingham.—I quite agree with you, Mrs. Carnaby, about the bull-fights.—Isn't it quite extraordinary?—Prejudice and custom, as you say.—Lights upstairs.—With the matadores and picadores, and — The omelette soufflée, Sir Henry, I know.—Delicate creatures, indeed!—handfuls of nuts

to throw the men down.—Very extraordinary.—At Tortoni's, Hardy's, or anywhere else, all the same.—Entirely steam.—Very fine sight, I dare say—two hundred horse power.—The meat, I believe, is given to the poor.—The “*Nel più*” is the only thing she does decently well.—I differ with you still about the omelette.—Dragged away by horses.—Dear George, do ring the bell.”

The last words were music to Jack's ears; and they were followed, in less than five minutes, by the adjournment of the “females,” Lady Gunnersbury stopping kindly to hope that he had not felt any draught of air from the door during dinner,—an act of civility and courtesy which her son, by his look, deemed entirely superfluous, but which induced Sir James, the moment the ladies were gone, to insist upon Brag's closing up on his side, in order to rescue him from the taciturnity of the baron, and the studied coldness of his son.

Lord Tom, in the plenitude of his good-nature, seeing Brag so unusually nervous and depressed, became anxious to put him at his

ease, and bring him out; besides which, he felt in some sort offended by the supercilious manner which Mr. Gunnersbury had thought proper to adopt towards a guest of his father's, whom he knew to be a friend of his. His lordship therefore gave Brag an "excellent character" in a whisper to Sir James, and, above all, lauded his judgment in horseflesh and his skill in equitation, to which he was the more readily inclined because his praises upon that point were really well-merited, and because the noble and taciturn Earl of Dullingham, who sat on the opposite side of the table, had been, in his day, a great sporting man, and who, although now declined into the vale of years, and retired from "the turf," still, as the old coachman loves the crack of the whip, entered with more interest into conversations touching such matters than any other.

"It strikes me," said Sir James, "that our Government ought in some way to interfere in order to prevent the exportation of our best English horses, the effect of which must eventually be, not only the improvement of

the breed in countries which, however peaceable the world looks just now, must and will, in the course of time, be at war with us, but the deprival of the English cavalry of their acknowledged superiority in cattle, at all events, over our enemies."

"If I had *my way*," said Brag, encouraged by the deference with which Sir James addressed this observation specially to him, "not a nag should go abroad — no, not at any price. I have been over and over again offered lumps of money for some of my hunters to go to France and Germany, and the deuce knows where. No, says I, not a bit of it: I'm English from top to toe — straight up, right down, and no mistake. I'll be no party to mending the foreign breed, let what may happen."

The German baron coughed, and young Gunnersbury silently expressed his astonishment at the burst which his father's injudicious patronage of the stranger had occasioned.

"You are a true sportsman, sir," said Lord Dullingham, gravely taking a pinch of snuff.

"And," said Lord Tom, "as good a rider as you 'll see from Totness to Newcastle."

"I do flatter myself," said Jack, "I can come it strong in that line"—(Here Sir Henry Rockly exchanged a look with Carnaby)—"and no mistake. Lord Tom knows what I 'm up to. In one week I 've hunted five times, rode two trotting matches, and three steeple chases, picked up a hundred stones with my mouth in fifty-five minutes, and killed two hundred and nineteen brace of partridges."

"With a long bow," said somebody, loud enough to be heard by everybody except Jack himself, who was now on his hobby.

"I stick at nothing in that way," said Brag —"do I, my lord?"—looking at Lord Tom. "Many a time I 've gone after hounds for twenty minutes, as blind as a bat, as wet as a rat, and as sick as a cat, with the skin of my leg rasped up by the top of a grower from my shin to my knee, and only brought to my senses then by bumping my head right against that of my horse, for all the world like a flash of lightning, that loosened all my teeth in their

sockets. That's what I call going across a country, and no mistake. I'd have backed my "Tantrum" against anything of his age and inches that ever switched rasper. Jem Jiggins had the handling of him for some time, and a queer one he was, at first; but they as begins rum, turns out generally well in the end. One day, however, sold him:—run three foxes, one after another, right on end, seventy-two miles and a half in all!—he was done:—got my money for him though, after that. Had him painted; the picture is now at a little place I have in Surrey, with me on his back, topping a flight of rails, just alongside of "Fly-away Dick," with portraits of two or three Melton men in the distance—eh!—that's good."

This sudden dash out of his super-incumbent despair, and the way in which he helped himself to the veteran bombardier's port-wine, in preference to claret, convinced Lord Tom that he was determined to rally against the tyrannical treatment which he had received from the young squire.

"Have you hunted much in Dorsetshire,

sir?" said the earl; "if you have not, I should think the Vale of Blackmore would give you some opportunities of showing your skill amongst the drains: half the fences are double, and the ditches wide and deep."

"No, my lord," said Brag, "I've never seen much of that country, but shouldn't care if I did. I've heard of it, and all the history of Oliver's blind mare; but folks *do* stretch sometimes. There's a story of a Lord Penfeather, or some such chap, which he used to tell of himself—of taking a double fence and a double ditch, and afterwards clearing a Dorchester doctor, horse and all, who had grounded on the top of his nob just outside a drain beyond *that*:—that's what I call going it. However, nobody's alive that saw it, so we have it all upon my lord's word, and that's not much of a go, I take it."

A sudden death-like silence ensued, interrupted only by a few hems from Sir James Gunnersbury and Sir Henry Rockly, a look of dismay from Lord Tom, and a simper of exultation from the young squire. The pause did not last long; everybody appeared asto-

nished, but nobody more than Jack. The silence was at last broken.

"I assure you, sir," said Lord Dullingham, in the most solemn manner, "the story is true —the doctor's name was Flapps. He indeed is dead, but there are others who saw it done, still living."

"Oh," said Brag, still unenlightened, "I don't know — but I *do* know a great many of Lord Penfeather's friends who say 'no go.' If your lordship saw it, why, in that case, it's all right, and no mistake; but from what they say of the chap himself who said he did it, why —"

"I did it myself, sir!" said the earl, more energetically than he usually said anything, drawing himself up into an erect position, looking pitchforks and tenter-hooks at Brag, and taking a pinch of snuff with all the dignity of the old school.

"That *is* Lord Penfeather," said Lord Tom, wishing to bring the affair to a speedy conclusion; "at least he was so, when he took the extraordinary leap in question."

"Oh!" said Brag, turning as white as a sheet — "Ah!—yes, my lord—I—"

At this most critical minute, when acted upon by various and very different feelings, every gentleman present most anxiously expected a *denouement*, the butler, an old and valued servant of Sir James, made his appearance to announce coffee in the drawing-room, and being privileged, by long service, to use a certain degree of familiarity with his master, added, in an audible whisper to that exemplary officer — “ There’s a large brig come ashore at the back of the pier, Sir James : it’s blowing terrible hard—and they are afraid she’ll be totally lost.”

“ Brig ashore !” cried Brag, most unceremoniously availing himself of a communication not made to him, and at the same moment jumping up—“ I’m off, Sir James ; excuse me—I *may* be of use :—swim like an otter. Swam all the way from Oxford to London in nineteen hours without stopping. Have saved nine lives already : got three medals from the Humane Society : don’t value the surf of a sixpence. I’ll bet fifty to four I’m on board that brig in ten minutes from leaving your house—back in less than

an hour. I know you 'll excuse me : — don't you think I'm right—eh? Humanity—philanthropy — and all that—straight up, right down, and no mistake. Be with you again almost directly."

Saying which, and without waiting for an answer, away Jack bustled, leaving his astonished companions in amazement ; Lord Tom, however, not a little annoyed that he should, in the end, have so far justified young Gunnersbury's *hauteur* in the beginning.

The earl bore the imputation of exaggerating his leap with perfect good-humour, and explained to the rest of the party his own astonishment at the occurrence ; but Lord Tom, beaten by the event, declined going up-stairs, upon the plea of endeavouring to prevent his friend from rashly endangering his life ; and when the other guests repaired to the drawing-room, he hastened to the beach, where, truly indeed, the sea was breaking over the ill-fated vessel, which kept striking so awfully and so frequently, as to leave little hope of her extrication. He could, however, learn no tidings

of Brag. It was quite true, however, that a venturesome gentleman had been seen swimming with a rope through the surf, and had succeeded in rescuing two ladies — but he was gone ; and so, after an hour's fruitless search for his intrepid friend, Lord Tom proceeded to “The Ship,” where he found that Mr. Brag, after having read the day’s London paper, and drunk two glasses of hot brandy and water, had gone to bed, and had been, at the time of his lordship’s arrival, more than an hour snug in his “nest.”



CHAPTER III.

"RATHER put your foot into it last night, Jack," said Lord Tom to the tiger when they met at breakfast.

"R-a-ther," said Jack. "How the deuce should I know that that greyheaded gig was the chap who took the flying-leap in the Vale of Blackmore half a century ago?"

"You got off deuced well," said Lord Tom; "for although Dullingham is too old to fight, there might have been a bother if it had not been for the brig."

"Never saw a finer sight!" said Jack. "Told you I'd soon be aboard: the minute I got down, saw two females waving white handkerchiefs—signals of distress: off I went—caught hold of the rope—clung like a cat—splash through the surf—up the side—seized

hold of them, held on by my teeth, and slipped along the hawser : put one girl under each arm, for all the world like a fowl with the gizzard under one wing and the liver under the other, and landed them in less than a quarter of an hour, safe and sound, smack, smooth, and no mistake."

" Their gratitude, I suppose, was unbounded," said Lord Tom, whose doubts of his friend's strict adherence to truth began hourly to increase.

" Gratitude !" said Jack—" they are females ; — when did you ever hear of an ungrateful female ?"

" Did you make yourself known to them ?" said Lord Tom.

" Not I," said Jack—" leave that for to-day. I hate boasting and puffing : if I had said who I was, the chances are, it would have been stuck in the newspapers. I can't stand notoriety : don't mind it in my own line—sporting, and all that sort of thing ; but else, all quiet and snug — mum 's the word, and no mistake."

"I admire your modesty," said Lord Tom ; "and your coming home here and going quietly to bed, without saying a syllable of the matter to the master of the house, or any of the waiters, shows your desire to be unknown and unnoticed. Didn't they see the condition in which you were when you came back?"

"Condition!" said Jack — "I was in no condition."

"Not wet?" said Lord Tom.

"On the contrary," said Jack, "I was uncommon dry. Sir Gunnersbury's port was what I call regular black-strap—Day and Martin—eh!—and no mistake."

"Why didn't you drink his claret?" said Lord Tom.

"Red pickled-cabbage juice bottled," said Jack :—"no—I had two glasses of hot 'with' when I came home, and then turned in."

"But did you sit in your wet clothes?" said Lord Tom.

"Wet clothes!" said Jack. "Oh!—wet clothes—eh!—oh! in getting aboard the brig :

—pshaw ! my dear lord—nothing—a mere flea-bite—salt water never gives cold—I blew myself dry, running home.”

“ Pleasant, gentlemanly man, young Gunnersbury,” said Lord Tom, swallowing the explanation without any apparent effort.

“ I never sighted such a fellow in the whole course of my run,” said Jack. “ You saw how I treated him—cut him dead—never so much as looked at him after the first glance : no—life’s too short to waste upon such a scarecrow as that. Eliza’s not bad — has eyes, eh ! — and knows how to use them. Mother’s a droll woman.”

“ Droll !—a polyglot,” said Lord Tom.

“ Oh ! her name was Glot ? ” said Jack :—“ rather old to be called Polly now. That Mrs. Carnaby looks lively, I take it. *She* has eyes too, and *she* knows how to use them. Carnaby seems a steady, respectable sort of man ; I suppose, it wouldn’t be straight up and right down to disturb his domestic happiness, — else, my lord——eh ! I say nothing—only — I know the sex, and no mistake.”

"I know nothing of either of them," said Lord Tom. "We must call on the Gunnersburys, however, to-day."

"When we are sure they are out," said Jack, who had scarcely uttered the words before he astonished Lord Tom by thrusting his head out of the window, and exclaiming—"By Job ! it *is*, and no mistake!"

"Who?—what?" cried his lordship, half frightened at the energetic manner of his companion.

"George Brown," replied Jack : "if ever I saw George Brown in my life, he has just this minute gone out of this house with another gentleman."

"And who is George Brown?" said Lord Tom ; "and where's the wonder?"

"Wonder enough, my lord," said Jack, "if you knew all: why, he is the major you have heard me talk of so often."

"Oh!" said Lord Tom, "the brother of your deserted damsel?—hadn't you better brush up your pistols, and make your will."

"No, no," said Jack, "not exactly that;

but I'll just ask the question. I know I can't be deceived in my man, although he looks older and browner than he did when I saw him last."

Saying which, he rang the bell.

Of the waiter who obeyed the summons he made his inquiries, and found, according to his anticipation, that it *was* the identical George Brown himself. In a moment Jack, who had always hitherto slurred over his connexion with this said George in his communings with Lord Tom, being convinced by the waiter's account that he had by some means become rich and prosperous, immediately altered his tone.

"Mr. Brown and his lady are going off to-morrow for Calais," said the man. "They would have gone to-day, but they were too late to get their carriages on board."

"Is Mrs. Brown here?" said Jack.

"Yes, sir," said the man; and being asked no more questions, retired.

"That's a lucky chance," said Jack. "I'll go to her this moment—find out all, how, and about it: can't make it out just yet."

"What! do you know the lady?" said Lord Tom.

"Know her!" said Jack; "shouldn't wonder: why, she's my sister, that's all."

"Your sister!" said his lordship; "I never understood you that the major was your brother-in-law. You always said that he was a distant connexion."

"So he was," said Jack, "when he was in India; he is nearer now. So up I go, smack smooth, and no mistake. Come along, my lord, I'll introduce you to Kitty; it will be a regular surprise upon her; and when George comes back he'll stare like a stuck pig. I like a surprise."

"I'm your man," said Lord Tom. "I shall enjoy the sight of your meeting."

"Here, waiter," said Jack; "which room is Mrs. Brown in?"

"That room, sir," said the waiter. "Do you wish to —"

"No, no," said Brag, in a half whisper; "don't say anything—I'm her brother. Want to astonish her; she don't know I'm here: haven't seen her for years. Hush!—now, my lord—" At this period of his conversation, the dex-

terous gentleman gently opened the door, and stepping softly up to the lady, exclaimed in a voice sweet as the music of the spheres—“Kitty!—I say, Kitty, my Kit!”

The noise roused the lady, who was sitting with her back to the door, reading: she turned round, started from her seat, and presented to the eyes of the astonished Jack, and his much-mystified companion, a beautiful countenance, in which an expression of alarm and surprise was predominant, but which, as the reader has, no doubt, anticipated, was not that of the *ci-devant* Kitty Brag.

The group were at what Sheridan, in “The Critic,” calls a “dead lock.”

“Why, it isn’t Kitty!” said Jack.

“I believe there is some mistake,” said Mrs. Brown, at the same moment extending her hand towards the bell-rope.

“Your name is Brown, ma’am, isn’t it?” said Jack.

“It is,” said the lady.

“Wife of George Brown, from India?” said Jack.

“Yes, sir.”

"Can't make it out," said Jack.

"If you have any commands for Mr. Brown, sir," said the lady, "he will be here in a few minutes."

"You had better return *then*," said Lord Tom, who saw that his expert friend had somehow got into a new scrape, and that the lady was extremely desirous of getting rid of his society.

"It's all right, by Job!" said Jack; "there's some kink or caddle somewhere, but in the main it's all straight up, right down, and no mistake,—for here's Nancy, as nice as Nip."

These words were uttered, accompanied with a caper such as would not have disgraced a dancing-master, and followed by a scream of horror from Anne, who at that moment entered the room, and who, as Jack advanced to take her hand, fell senseless into a chair.

The changes which had taken place in Jack's views and intentions during a shorter period than the relation of this event requires, were most particularly characteristic. That Brown was Brown, browner than he was, Jack was

convinced ; that his wife was not Kitty at once pointed out to him that his sister must be dead, and that George had remarried : hence, like lightning, it darted into his mind that it must have been through *her* that he had acquired the means of living as it too manifestly appeared he did ; inasmuch as, besides the waiter's previous representation of the difficulty of "embarking the carriages," the sudden appearance of a valet, two lady's maids, and a strapping livery servant, jacketed, topped, and leathered for travelling, who rushed into the apartment at the tintinnabulary summons of Mrs. Brown, confirmed him in the opinion that his now readily acknowledged brother-in-law had become wealthy, and consequently important, and was therefore much to be cherished and toadied.

These momentarily excited feelings were, as it were, electrically driven into another channel the instant he beheld Anne Brown. There she was,—she who had confessed her affection for him,—the sister of the rich and prosperous George, now, in his own opinion, a suitable

match for him : and in less than a second more he had resolved that the meek, the mild, the modest unoffending creature whom he had neglected, slighted, and traduced for years, should still be his ; and that they would somehow, in the end, make a snug family circle, all right, and no mistake.

" What on earth does all this mean ?" said a gentleman entering the room in the midst of the confusion :—" what has happened ?"

By this time Anne had been led, or rather carried, from the sitting-room by Mrs. Brown and her maid. For a moment the last-arrived gentleman was absent, and the two intruders were left alone in the apartment.

" Missed your tip, somehow, Jack," said Lord Tom.

" All right in the end," said Jack. " Don't you remember our little friend in Regent Street ? —that 's Nancy."

" Oh !" said my lord, looking uncommonly wise.

" Exactly so," said Jack, looking particularly cunning.

" Gentlemen," said the stranger, re-entering the room, " I am yet to learn the cause of your abrupt visit to these apartments."

" It's all right," said Jack — " all fair and above board. George Brown married my sister—that 's the mistake. This lady is not my sister — that 's clear as light. I never heard of poor Kitty's death!—but she 's gone, no doubt, and George will tell us all about it. But George has a sister too: Nancy; — and if I flurried her at first seeing me after so long a parting, I 'm deuced sorry for that. However, it 's all natural: and so I 'll call in by-and-by, when George comes back. Sunshine after rain, and no mistake. This, sir, is my friend, Lord Thomas Towzle—so that 's all right."

" I believe," said the gentleman, " if you are the brother of the former Mrs. Brown, I have heard your name mentioned as a very particular friend of Mr. Brown's sister."

" R-ā-ther so," said Jack, " but circumstances occurred to keep us apart. Never had but one feeling towards her—I believe it is what you call reciprocal; and I am deuced

sorry I took her so aback : however, by-and-by, as I say——”

“ Sir,” said the gentleman, “ what course Mr. Brown may choose to pursue towards you I am at a loss to conjecture ; but with respect to his sister, it becomes *my* duty to act for myself—I am her husband, sir : although I assumed that character only three days since, it is my province to protect her from insult and alarm. Permit me to say, sir, that your absence is what we all most particularly desire : indeed, that we should have been favoured by your presence did not enter into our calculations, although we were accidentally made aware of your residence in this house shortly after our arrival.”

“ Married to *my* Nancy !” said Jack ; “ oh, that is a go !”

“ Yes, sir,” said Dr. Mead, for it was he who spoke ; “ and not married to her, until, in the candour and ingenuousness of her heart and mind, she had informed me of all the circumstances of your early acquaintance ; — nay, more, sir, of the preference for you which

she at that time acknowledged. If you will take the trouble to cast a retrospective glance over your conduct during a period when you might have properly evinced the sincerity of your professions — and the total neglect of a being whom you fancied your victim, you will perhaps perceive through the gloom a glimmering of light sufficient to show you the indelicacy and impropriety of your remaining one minute longer in this room.”

“ What ! did she tell you *all* ? ” said Jack, quite at sea, and scarcely knowing what he said.

“ All, sir,” said the doctor ; “ but perhaps not *quite* all that you have permitted your licentious tongue to utter.”

“ I—sir—I ? ” said Jack.

“ Come,” said Lord Tom, “ you had better come away.”

“ But my sister—” said Jack.

“ Delicacy, sir,” said Dr. Mead, “ seals my lips with regard to that unfortunate person. She is in her grave, to which she was borne, unfollowed by an injured, outraged husband.

It is fit you should know this; and it is fortunate that the duty of telling you the bitter truth devolves rather upon *me* than on my brother-in-law himself."

"By Job!" said Jack, scratching his head.

"Indeed, I would venture to suggest your retiring," said the doctor, "before his return from his walk. His affection for his mother and sister is ardent and strong; and if he found you here, something perhaps might occur which, for all our sakes, had better be avoided."

"Oh," said Jack, "in course I'll not stop a minute—no:—as you say, there's no use in that kind of thing. It is all very surprising, and particularly unpleasant: but you, sir, are a gentleman, and act as such; not that I have the pleasure of knowing your name, but —"

"My name is Mead," said the doctor; "and I feel the greatest satisfaction in announcing it to you, in order that you may be good enough for the future to avoid any communication with the humble individual who bears it. I wish you a very good morning, sir!"

"Good morning, sir!" said Jack. "I certainly should have liked to shake hands with Anne."

"I assure you, sir, she is not well enough to risk any further interview," said the doctor.

"Well then, in course there's an end," said Jack. "Come, my lord—we'll go. Good morning, sir!"

Saying which, infallible Jack crawled out of the room, followed by Lord Tom, who made a slight bow to the doctor.

"Hadn't we better go down the back-stairs," said Jack; "it's no use running the risk of meeting that fellow, Brown: one can't fight a serjeant."

"Fight whom?" said Lord Tom.

"Why," said Jack, "he never was anything but a serjeant."

"What!—learned in the law?" said his lordship.

"Club law, if any," said Jack. "No—a serjeant in a marching regiment."

"Why, I thought you told me he was a major in the army!" said Lord Tom.

"So he was—serjeant-major," said Jack, who, the moment he found himself despised and kicked out of his brother-in-law's society, suddenly changed his ground, and tried to run down the man and his connexions whom, ten minutes before, he was ready to eulogize to the skies.

"I should like very much to belong to his corps," said Lord Tom: "it must be deuced good pay for a serjeant to enable him to do what *he* does in the way of living. But—Jack—what do you mean to do next? Do you mean to take any notice of what that Mr. Mead, or whatever his name is, said?—it was not over-courteous, you know."

"No," said Jack, "but then I make allowances. I certainly did tantalize his poor little wife. I *am* a sad dog in that way. 'Pon my life! it is more my misfortune than my fault."

"Yes," said Lord Tom; "but then—somehow—however, it all depends upon feeling—only he decidedly turned you out of the room."

"Well, you know, my lord," said Jack,

"he had a right to do that, because they pay for separate apartments, and in course I had no business there. If it had been really my sister, instead of another wife, you would have seen how I should have acted: but, you see, she's gone;—and—eh!"

"Yes," said Lord Tom, "the gentleman was good enough to mention that fact."

"I didn't like to ask further particulars," said Jack; "but it seems deuced strange that one shouldn't have heard of her death."

"Perhaps your mother has heard of it," said Lord Tom; "only I suspect you are not a very constant correspondent of that worthy lady's."

"Maybe she has," said Jack, evidently thinking as much as he could.

"Do you mean to stay here?" said Lord Tom. "I intended to have crossed to-morrow; but I suppose it wouldn't be agreeable for you to go afloat with your newly-recovered connexions."

"Not exactly," said Jack. "Oh, in course, I shall stay here till you go: but I couldn't

well have gone to-morrow anyhow, because I have engaged myself to pass one day, before we went over, with a friend at Walmer."

"What! at the Castle?" said Lord Tom, making a face, invisible to Jack, whose real character began to develope itself rapidly.

"No, no," said Jack archly, "nothing of that sort: all snug — fellow-passenger in the 'Union' — promises not to be broken:— mum! — that's all right, and no mistake. I shall go over directly, and stay till to-morrow after—"

"—After 'The Ferret' starts for Calais," said Lord Tom. "You are right—peaceably disposed, and averse from collision. I'll wait for you; only keep yourself all right for the Champ de Mars."

"Deuced odd name for a race-course, isn't it?" said Jack.

"What's in a name?" said Lord Tom.

"Not much," said Jack. "One would never fancy that pleasant gentleman up-stairs to be called Mead, from the sour way in which he talks."

"Oh, hang him!" said Lord Tom, who, foreseeing that if there was anything like a fight, he must inevitably be Jack's friend upon the occasion, lent himself entirely to his views of the subject, and acceded completely to his notion of terminating the affair peaceably. "I should have nothing to do with any of them; it is all what I call a tangle, and would take a deuced sight of trouble to unravel it: so start for Walmer, and I'll wait your return."

It is impossible to describe the delight which Brag felt at this acquiescence on the part of his lordship in all his propositions; nor was it long before he put his scheme in execution: and two o'clock found him strolling about upon the beach at Deal, having secured a bed-room at one of the worst inns in the place, the whole history of his promise and assignation with his "Fanny of Timmol" being, as the reader will naturally believe, a bright fiction of his own particular school.

It is scarcely necessary now to mention, that in the case of Dr. and Mrs. Mead "the course of true love *did* run smooth," since the doctor

himself announced his marriage with Anne to Jack Brag ; nor is it more necessary to eulogize the candour and single-mindedness on her part, to which he also referred, and which determined her to relate to her intended husband every circumstance connected with her intimacy with her early lover. They were united at St. George's, Hanover Square ;—not because it is *the church for matrimony par excellence*, but because it happened to be the church of the parish in which Mead's house was located. They had started from town three days before, and were joined at Sittingbourne by the Browns, who, reducing the prescribed “treacle period,” proposed, as we have already seen, accompanying them to Paris.

The evil star of Jack, however, was just now in the ascendant. It is true that his skilful and timely retreat to Walmer saved him from any inconvenience likely to arise from a meeting with Mr. George Brown ; but it occasioned another calamity, which to him, even with all his prudence, was worse than the chance of being wounded in a rencounter with his injured

brother-in-law : — but of this no more at present.

When Jack had finished his solitary dinner, and sipped his glass of grog — for in the house he had selected for his abode wine was wholly out of the question, he fell into a lengthened reflection upon his family affairs: he felt anxious to ascertain the real history of his sister's defection and fall, and to discover how the long-despised George had attained to wealth and importance such as he evidently possessed. The fortunate marriage of the neglected Anne equally puzzled him, and he resolved to while away the dull evening by writing his mother a letter, in which, giving a modified account of his discovery of the Browns, he might, as delicately as he could, ascertain the extent of his mother's knowledge touching Kitty. Of course, he could get no answer until he was in Paris, his desire of going to which place was by no means increased by the fact that the Meads and Browns were going thither also. It was, however, impossible to disappoint Lord Tom, who so entirely reck-

oned upon his riding, and he therefore consoled himself with the reflection that Paris was a large city, and that they should not stay there long; and that it was by no means impossible that he might not fall in with any of his connexions during his stay.

Then there came into his head a sort of question whether he ought to assume mourning for his departed relative; but, after a discussion with himself, he decided, that as she must have been dead for a considerable time, it would be ridiculous to begin to weep then; besides which, his appearance in a "suit of sables" would naturally lead to questions which it would be neither agreeable nor convenient for him to answer. He accordingly resolved upon saying nothing upon the subject, but upon writing, to hear the extent of the evil, from his respectable parent.

While all this was going on, a storm was brewing at Dover calculated to swamp the pretender upon his return, and which was a splendid illustration of the saying, that "misfortunes never come alone." The reader will

recollect the infelicitous *tête-à-tête* which Jack enjoyed at the sign of “The Duke of Marlborough” with the Earl of Ilfracombe: the sociable mutton-chop; the social glass of punch; with the pleasing episodes of Mr. Figg’s horses, and the red-elbowed Rachel.

The reader will also recollect that the said Earl of Ilfracombe, the denounced “Kill-joy,” was uncle to Lord Tom Towzle, his sister being Duchess of Ditchwater. It was quite clear that the event, and the statements of Jack of his great intimacy with Lord Tom, must form the special subject of conversation between the uncle and nephew whenever they met. It so happened that they had not met since this curious *rencontre* at “The Duke of Marlborough.” Lord Ilfracombe, his wife and family, had gone to Brussels three or four days after that event; and, as if Old Nick had really set his cloven foot in it, actually arrived from the Continent on the morning following Jack’s departure to Walmer, and before his return thence; a calamity—for such it proved to him—which would not have occurred, if he had not induced Lord Tom to postpone his

passage until the next day, to suit his convenience and security as regarded other matters.

One of the principal morning recreations of Dover is the inspection of the passengers who land in the bay behind the pier, after the rolling and pitching which are so peculiarly the attributes of a voyage across the Channel from Calais: women pale and wan, (with their long ringlets all uncurled and limp, hanging adown their cheeks, enveloped in plaid cloaks,) brown cloaks, green cloaks, and sometimes soaked in fine silks and ermines, which their love of appearance has induced them to retain.— Men, with caps, and straps, and jerkins, and pea jackets, and Welsh wigs in every variety of deformity, scarce able to endure the tiresome assiduities of the “commissioners” from the different inns; some laden with leather hat-boxes, others with bags of sundry descriptions, and all looking sad, wan, and miserable. All these objects excite an interest, and often afford amusement; and, of course, when people can be amused and interested at so cheap a rate, the *spectacle* is always well attended.

To the scene of action strolled Lord Tom, after having witnessed the early departure of "The Ferret," with all Jack's tormentors; and as each boat-load left the newly arrived steamer, his eye vainly roamed in search of somebody he knew. At length, however, his surprise and gratification were simultaneously excited by the appearance of Lord and Lady Ilfracombe, Lord and Lady Dawlish, and Lady Fanny Smartly, his lordship's cousin. The recognition and meeting were exceedingly agreeable, for Lord Tom, who was always on his best behaviour in the society of his maternal uncle, was a considerable favourite with his aunt and cousin. One of the most striking proofs of his desire to stand well-with this branch of his family was the fact, that he had never thought proper to present or introduce his tiger Brag to any member of it; and although Jack, to whose ear their names and probably attributes, had grown familiar by hearing a great deal of them from Lord Tom, his practical and personal knowledge of them was—*nil*.

Lady Fanny was the first to recognise her cousin ; and in a moment afterwards, pale, sick, and sad as Lady Ilfracombe and Lady Dawlish were, they "rallied all life's energies" to wave their hands in token of kind acknowledgment, looking more like a party under the care of Charon than of the jolly mortal boatmen, who cared no more for the wabbling of the waters than a fine lady does for an undisturbed rumble over a macadamized road.

They had intended to proceed direct to town, but the fatigue of the ladies, joined to the opportunity of passing a pleasant day with Lord Tom, induced them to change their design. The greetings and welcomings of the party were really true and genuine, for never was there a happier family, nor one whose whole delight centred more completely in the domestic pleasures of home. Lord Tom escorted Lady Ilfracombe and Lady Fanny ; Lord Ilfracombe and his son were the supporters of Lady Dawlish ; and so they ground their way, instep-deep, over the shingles—a walk said by experienced persons to be infinitely more tremendous than the tread-mill for an equal

space of time, — until they reached the wonted “ Ship,” and whither Lord Tom insisted upon their going, in opposition to Lord Ilfracombe, who, being the “ sickest ” of the party, was all for its rival, because it was nearer the landing-place, and because the landlord was most civil and obliging,— all of which character he deserves. But Lord Tom was to have his way, and so the party were as speedily as possible deposited at “ The Ship,” which, with all its splendour and all its gaiety, does not half so much cheer our hearts as it did when it was an humbler-looking house, full of comforts afforded in a different style — an attempt at splendour which never can reach the scale to which it pretends, is always a mistake. Take “ The Fountains ” at Canterbury as an example of perfect snugness without pretension. Recollect that a late noble earl, and prime minister, in his journeys to Walmer, always stopped to dine and sleep at “ The Rose ” at Sittingbourne, because it was excellent in its way, and perfectly different from the ordinary routine of his life ; and recollect that in all its appointments

and accessories, innkeepers who deal in tinsel and tawdry, in the hope of making their houses something like what their noble customers are used to, fail entirely : neat and clean are the qualities of an inn—grand and great, must be ridiculous.

Into "The Ship" scarcely had the Ilfracombe party been ushered, before breakfast was prepared for the voyagers, who, after the refreshments of the dressing-room, recovered themselves entirely, and proceeded to make up for any loss of appetite which they might have sustained on the water. Never did aristocratic party more revel in the *dejeuner à la fourchette* put down before them than these ; and Lord Tom, who had already done breakfast the first, particularly well delighted at the opportunity afforded for the reunion, managed breakfast the second with infinite glee.

They were a family of love—Lord Tom avowedly the *roué*,—but still never betraying any of those symptoms which were likely either to excite the anxiety or displeasure of those members now present. They laughed, and talked ;

Lord Ilfracombe related many anecdotes of the *liberality* of the King of the Belgians—and some extraordinary traits of the *liberalism* of the King of the French;—discussed, in *his* way, the anomalous position of a monarch raised to a throne not his own by the clamour of a people, whose liberties he was subsequently obliged to restrain with greater rigour than had ever been attempted even in the time of their idol and tyrant Buonaparte; and the curious fact of his denunciation even unto the death, of the contrivers of barricades, by which barricades alone he had himself obtained the crown.

From these, and similar general subjects, his lordship glanced to the more domestic topics of Dover; and Lord Tom explained precisely his position there—his connexion with a gentleman whom they would see at dinner, Mr. Brag, and who was to be his lordship's companion to Paris for the purpose of riding his race.

“ Why, then, you really *do* know Mr. Brag ! ” said Lord Ilfracombe.

“ I do,” said Lord Tom ;—“ but do *you* ? ”

The train was fired ; — the fatal evil had occurred. Then it was that Lord Ilfracombe first had the opportunity of relating all that the reader already knows, about their meeting, &c. ; — then it was that Lord Tom first became “ wide awake ” to the character of the tiger he had so long patronized : — and then it was he was resolved to give him a reception upon his return,

“ More honoured in the breach than the observance,” and kick him soundly for the insolent falsehoods he had dared to utter even to the face of their object. One thing alone interfered to prevent this obvious manifestation of his contempt — and that was, the debt, which he could not but acknowledge, but which, alas ! he could not pay.

Lord Ilfracombe, instead of being the “ Kill-joy ” described by Brag, was a remarkably agreeable person, and, more than most people, ready to enter into a joke. Before Brag’s arrival, he entreated Lord Tom, instead of taking the matter up seriously, to punish the pretender by allowing him to join the party as usual, to permit him gradually to

become acquainted with the ladies, whom he might not remember, and conclude the evening by making a matter of jest of that which could produce no satisfactory result if treated in any grave manner.

“ At the same time, Tom,” said the earl, “ I honestly confess, for your own sake,—let him down as you may—the easier the better,—I *do* think you ought to get rid of him,—if after the Paris races, well and good: but you have no idea how ready the world is to attribute motives. This little man is of use to *you*, because he *is* little, and rides light; but — *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*. Pay a jockey, and let him ride—but do not make him an associate; do not give him the power of gossiping about your relations, as this little man did to me. You cannot pay *him*, and therefore he must, if he ride, take it out ‘in kind,’ as the clergy have it.”

Lord Tom agreed with every word said by his noble uncle, even to the assertion that he could not pay Jack. This was the crisis fatal to Brag.

" My dear uncle," said Lord Tom, " will you forgive what I am going to tell you?"

" Anything, Tom," said his lordship. " I am not hard-hearted."

" I admit to you," said Lord Tom, " that recent events have opened my eyes to the character of this man. Last night he exposed himself in a house to which I had the credit of taking him. I have got a letter from town this morning, which gives me the whole account of his incalculable insolence in making offers to two ladies, sisters, who, both in joke, accepted him."

" Mrs. Dallington and Miss Englefield," said Lord Ilfracombe, " I presume."

" My dear uncle, how in the name of wonder, do you know anything about it?" said Lord Tom.

" Your exemplary friend himself," replied the earl, " told me the whole story of their devotion to him, with their names and places of residence, at the very moment in which he was spanning the by no means taper waist of the barmaid of the alehouse."

" You don't mean *that!*" said Lord Tom.

" How else could I possibly have known it?" said the earl. " Rely upon it, he is to be discarded."

" Well then," said Lord Tom, " I must come to the fact:—I owe the fellow four hundred pounds. The law of primogeniture, my dear uncle, makes us, Lord Toms, Lord Johns, and Lord Bobs, anything but rich; and we *are* consequently run sometimes to do things of which, upon sober reflection, we are seriously ashamed:—now there's the truth—he volunteered upon all occasions, and I, like a fool, accepted his proffered accommodation."

" The city men say," said Lord Ilfracombe, " accept anything, except a bill: however, Tom, I have been young myself. I will get you out of the difficulty. Mr. Brag may ride your horses; but although you may be saddled by others, he shall not ride *you*. You shall have the money; you shall Fectorize him this very day. But I'll have no quarrelling—I will have it all my own way. I dined with him at the small inn—he shall dine with us at a large

one ; and if I have not my revenge out of him, I shall be astonished. If he had denounced me as a seducer, a murderer, or even a Whig, I could have borne it all ; but when he called me to my face a “ Kill-joy,” and a “ wet blanket,” it was too bad. Let him come ; let us have him to dine, and I will instruct the other members of our little family community to play their parts. But not one word of those whom he is to meet, till we have him in our meshes.”

“ My dear uncle, you are too good to me,” said Lord Tom.

“ Not a bit of it,” said the earl. “ There are a set of underbred fellows in the world, who swagger and strut about, because by some accident, sometimes as little honourable or decent to themselves as may be, they have got hold of money, which they as little deserve as they had any right to expect — who fancy, because, from their very insignificance, they have shuffled, screwed, or pushed themselves into society to which they ought not to belong, they are to mount upon their money-bags into yet higher places ; and who, exactly in proportion to

their natural meanness and original insignificance, perk up their noses and toss their heads, to give them a consequence, which makes them insufferably odious to the people with whom they really *do* live, and incalculably ridiculous to those with whom they never can live, let them try as much as they may. This man Brag is one of that class, and it will be a very slight punishment for his immeasurable insolence to get rid of him after our own fashion. So, come along; we'll to Fector's: you shall have the money, and we will eject your familiar in the civilest and most amiable imaginable manner: *that* part of the affair you will leave to *me*; the discharge of the debt remains with *you*."

The letter which Lord Tom had received from Rushton himself, describing the outrageous conduct of Jack, and its merited results, went so far to convince him that Brag was neither more nor less than a disgrace, that his first impulse, on his return to Dover, would no doubt have been to put him on his defence, as far as that affair went; but clogged as he

had hitherto been with the debt, it would have ended in a laugh-off or a qualification; and however much convinced he might have been of the unworthiness, not to call it insanity, of his conduct, they would have continued their route to Paris, and their subsequent connexion. Now, armed with the means of vindicating his character by the abandonment of such an associate, Lord Tom felt himself doubly braced by the breeze, as he and his uncle left the door of the bank, his lordship having the amount of his debt to Jack safely lodged in the sinister pocket of his lordship's trowsers.

The events of the day remain to be told.

CHAPTER IV.

LITTLE did Brag suspect that a pit so deep as that, which Lord Ilfracombe proposed, was digging for him during his forced absence from his noble friend Lord Tom ; still less indeed, did he anticipate the arrival of that noble Earl, which, full as he naturally must be of the history of the dreadful luncheon, if he had imagined it possible, would have satisfied him that the last explosion was at hand. The truth is, that being ignorant of any such facts, and innocent of any such anticipation, Jack's thoughts were fully occupied in reflections upon the still unexplained fate of his sister Kitty, the worldly advancement of George Brown, and the evidently advantageous marriage of Anne.

In the confusion of his ideas as to the causes of this advancement, and these advantages, and

a sort of a compunctionous visiting in the shape of a recollection of the manner in which he had treated and talked of the woman whom he once fancied he loved, who certainly had loved him, and whom he now as certainly had lost, Jack passed no pleasant time. The weather was stormy, and although it might have

—suited the present temper of his mind, it was by no means so agreeable in its congeniality as “the rocking of the battlements” was to the sable hero of Dr. Young.

Time, however, as we all know, will go—although as Shakspeare says, he hath many different paces,—still he keeps going, and after Jack had finished his two glasses of grog, and folded and sealed his letter to his mother, (which he proposed slipping into the post himself the next morning in order that nobody in the inn might see the direction), he rang the bell in order that he might—

To keep his spirits up
By pouring spirits down—

desire the waiter to bring him some more hot brandy and water.

No waiter came to answer the summons ; the lout who had previously attended him having gone to the stable ; but, instead of that attendant there appeared before him a sylph-like creature, who seemed to have descended from some other sphere to do his bidding — the very Hebe of waiting-maids — a girl as fair, and as modest in her deportment as if she had just stepped from the threshold of a nunnery. “ Acasto’s dear remains” could not have been more interesting — her face lovely, her flaxen locks inartificially falling about her ears — her innocent blue eyes cast down upon the floor, and her cheeks suffused with blushes such as tint the opening rose of future whiteness.

Jack was at once confounded, delighted, frightened and amazed : his first impression was, that it was a mistake—that the plainly yet gracefully dressed creature he saw before him was, like himself, a visiter at the inn, and that she had either in mistake, or because she had seen him in the course of the day, entered his room. Don Quixote himself was not more prone to the exaltation of his “ loves” than

Jack : he gazed, he doubted — rubbed up his hair — pulled up his collar, and was going to try to say something, when Fanny Martin, (such was her name,) saved him the trouble by asking him if *he rang* ?

“ I ring !” said Jack, “ yes,—yes. I rang—
that is— eh !—I beg your pardon—do you ?—
eh ! —

“ What did you please to want, sir ?” said Fanny.

“ I rang for the waiter,” said Jack.

“ Tom only stops in the house till eight, sir,” said Fanny ; “ I can get you what you want.”

“ Umph,” said Jack, “ that’s — eh ! —well
— I’m sorry to give you the trouble, — a glass
of hot brandy and water —if you please.”

Fanny curtesied, retired, and shut the door.

Jack’s head was gone — turned, twisted, —
what could it mean ? — never was such a pretty
creature, — what was she — bar-maid, house-
maid, chamber-maid — what ? It was a bright
vision, — it was something to love ; — for, upon
Moore’s principle, (and Jack had done more in
the way of advances, however ill the combats

eventually turned out, by the aid of a smattering familiarity with the mischievous beauties of that bewitching poet than anything else)

“ Twere a shame when flowers around us rise
To make light of the rest, if the rose be not there ;
And the world’s so rich in resplendent eyes
‘Twere a pity to limit one’s love to a pair.

“ Love’s wing and the Peacock’s are nearly alike,
They are both of them bright, but they’re changeable too ;
And wherever a new beam of beauty can strike,
It will tincture love’s plume with a different hue.

“ Then, oh ! what pleasure, wherever we rove,
To be doom’d to find something that still is dear ;
And to know, when far from the lips we love,
We have but to make love to the lips that are near.”

This is a-faith almost as convenient and elastic as that of Popery, although vulgarised down by Jack to the practical siege of a chamber-maid at Deal, some degrees superior, however, to the red-elbowed Rachel of the Duke’s Head, who, as we have already seen, did most unequivocally reject his “ delicate attentions.”

And there was besides a history, of which Fanny Martin was the heroine,—a history that

everybody in Deal knew, and which made everybody who knew her modest demeanour and excellent character very solicitous for her welfare. But she shall speak for herself — poor girl ! she is but humble. Let us hope—we say no more — that the gaiety and sprightliness of our hero may have no ill effect upon her peace of mind, or the excellence of her character.

Jack, when she left the room, was, as we have seen, what he called “toppled over.”—“Why, bless my soul !” he mentally ejaculated, — that is, said to himself, — “Nancy Brown never was like *that* — Blanche — psha !” — (be it remembered that the ale and grog in which he had solitarily indulged, mixed with his grief and anxieties, had dreadfully fermented.) Miss Englefield — what’s a Miss ! — what indeed — she’s amiss — Mrs. Dallington — two fools — eh ! — made me a laughing-stock. What’s the sincerity of that — young Gunnersbury — beast ! — hate him — deuce take that old lord with the snuff-box yesterday — The brig — psha ! Lovely creature this — must have a talk with *her* — eyes — hair — eh ! I hope Brown is gone — ah — foolish

—how could he have got that money? Poor Anne — eh — did like her once — Walworth — mud — fog — squash — nonsense, couldn't — Old mother mad — deuce take Waterloo Bridge — hate Lord Tom — wish he'd pay me my money — don't like going to Paris — meet Nancy. Hope the farmer has given up his action about the trespass at the steeple chase — eh, — never left direction for the attorney. Hang that old Ilfracombe — Tom's uncle — made a fool of myself there — beast Figgs and the horses. Want money to carry on the war. What happened to Kitty — all wrong, I suppose. What a noise the wind makes! — bore being at sea. She's a long time coming — think she was hit — saw her look — innocent — eh! Well — ah — that's all right and no mistake. Three Mackerels — comb and night-cap; — deuce of a bore — dirty monster — eh! — wonder who the people were standing all about — Tom never said a word. Mrs. Carnaby — eh! — don't know — pretty woman — poor Carnaby! Well — I wonder if they go to Paris! Old fool, Lady Gunnersbury! Wonder if Lydiard will be married soon. Wretched wet

night — good-natured slavey to offer the cab. Oh ! — they may all go to Nycko. Where is this fair — eh ! — creature. Oh — ”

This half-whispered, half-thought soliloquy was scarcely ended, when Fanny re-appeared with the glass of hot brandy and water: this she deposited upon the table, and was about to retire.

“ I say,” said Jack, “ stop a minute, — just shut the door.”

“ I can’t stop, sir,” said Fanny.

“ I only want just to say three words to you,” said Jack.

“ Well, sir,” said Fanny, “ I can hear them as well with the door open, as shut.”

“ Yes, so can anybody else,” said Jack.

“ I’m sure, sir,” said the girl, looking all modesty, “ you would not want to say anything to *me* that everybody in the house mightn’t hear.”

“ No,” said Jack, “ only the draft of air from the door, you know, is likely to give one cold. I really want just to ask you — a question or two.”

"Oh, sir," said Fanny, "I'll shut to the door, if you wish it, only I can't stop a minute."

"Tell me," said Jack, essaying to take her hand, which she gently withdrew, "what the deuce does it mean?"

"What, sir?" said Fanny.

"Why, don't you twig?" said Jack. "What the deuce brings such a sweet, lovely creature as you, into such a place as this?"

"My good fortune, sir," said Fanny.

"Your good fortune," said Jack, "I should think that you might better your fortune if you chose."

"No, sir," said Fanny; "my father was a native of this place, and so was my mother: he was lost at sea, and my mother is dead. I was an orphan, one of four, and my mistress has been a mother to me ever since: I am quite happy where I am, and very grateful for her kindness."

"You are a regular angel," said Jack. "I meant to have gone away to-morrow; but now

I have seen you I'm not sure I shall ever go away — at least without you."

"The longer you stay the better, sir," said Fanny with a smile, which had scarcely left her pretty countenance, before she quitted the room and shut the door.

That smile convinced him that his never-failing qualities of person and conversation had triumphed, and that the fair orphan was all at once, heart and soul devoted to him; and it was at this moment he began to repent his positive engagement to Lord Tom for the next day, to which, as his ruminations have already informed us, he began to grow somewhat disinclined upon other considerations.

A nervous anxiety to see and have the opportunity of again speaking to the really beautiful girl, induced Jack to ring his bell very soon after he had finished his brandy and water, and desire to be shown to his bed-room ; —it was then about half past ten o'clock. The sylph came—gave him his candle—attended him to his chamber, and there underwent a certain degree of vulgar persecution in the way of

very marked attentions, from which she contrived to escape, not—as a faithful historian, I am bound to say — without the undesired gain of one single kiss from Jack, which was so hastily given and so seriously repulsed, that it remains doubtful whether it fell upon the cheek which the attempt had brightened into a beautiful blush, or upon a depending curl which hung clustering inartificially over it. Probably Crispissa

———tended her favourite lock,
and the presence of Ariel was scarcely needed,
since Fanny felt no “shock.”

Jack, however, did not see the door close or hear the retreating footsteps of the delicate hand-maiden, without, as usual, satisfying himself that he had settled *that* point, and that if it were not for the provoking necessity of going to Dover in the morning, he should, in a very short time, be the favoured of all the admirers which so sweet a “creechur” must necessarily possess.

Full of these new thoughts, which, as his small mind had not room for many, naturally

expelled all the other previous occupants, Jack "turned in," as the sailors say, and tossed and tumbled about, not much soothed or composed by the various noises incidental to a minor inn at Deal during a blowing night. The impending morrow now was viewed by him with double dismay, since he had discovered a new attractive power where he was; and as for the meekness or modesty of anybody in *that* station, *that* was all a regular mistake.

Jack had been deposited horizontally for about an hour, with something like an expectation of an accidental "look in" of Fanny to see after his candle, or upon some other little errand to which she might have been excited by his never-failing attractions, when, just as he was dropping off into a slumber, the result of exhaustion of thought, Jack, to his infinite delight, but not surprise, heard a gentle delicate noise at his chamber door, not very much unlike

"The woodpecker tapping the hollow beech tree."

The sound roused him in a moment: he sat up in bed—saw the glimmering of a light through

the key-hole, and in one of those half impeded whispers, in which gentlemen under such circumstances sometimes express themselves, said “Who’s there?”

“Me, sir,” was the response uttered in the sweet voice of the gentle Fanny.

“Come in,” said Jack, still more effectually subduing his voice, “come in.”

The pretty rustic obeyed the call, and stood before him with a light in her hand, more lovely to *his* eyes than ever.

“You are a dear soul,” said Jack, ten thousand ideas rushing at once into his imagination, which as I have just said was not calculated to hold more than one at a time,—“you are come, are you—what is it?—eh!—”

“Why, sir,” said Fanny blushing, and looking modestly down at the candle she carried, “I’m sure I beg pardon, sir,—but—could you spare half your bed to-night?”

“Spare!” said Jack, sitting bolt upright, conscious that he had not overrated the power of his fascination,—“do you doubt it?—spare!—to be sure—to be sure—all right and no mistake.”

"That's all right indeed, sir," said Fanny, "because, sir, here is Mr. Van Slush Harridick, a North-Sea trader, just arrived, wet to the skin, who hasn't been in bed for three weeks, sir, and we should have had no other place whatever to put him in to-night, if you had not been so good as to say 'yes.' "

"Mr. Van what?" said Jack, in an agony.

"Van Slush Harridick," was replied in the hoarse gruff voice of a man six feet four in height, and four feet six in circumference, dressed in a well-saturated pea jacket and dreadnought trowsers, who followed the girl into the room the moment the permission was granted;—"And I dank you var moch, zir, vor de commodation: I zleeps zound, and znores not."

"What does all this mean?" said Jack,—"I don't understand."

"Bot I too," said Van Slush Harridick;—"Vanny ask for half de ped,—you zay yez—wot vor now you zay no. I aff not zlept dry vor dese dree veeks von vay and doder, and I zshall drop to my znoozle like a dop."

"Like a what, sir?" said Jack.

"A dop," said the giant.—"Zo, Vanny, get up my bipe, and my pag, and my pacco, and my prandy and vaterz, for bleaze de bigs I mill haf a buff and a zwig before I durns in."

"Do you mean to say, sir," said Jack, "that you propose to share my bed?"

"Doo be zure I too," said Harridick, "Vanny asked you; if no?—if yez?—you zaid yez—zo here gose."

Saying which Harridick began to disencumber himself of some part of his drapery, Fanny having previously obeyed his orders about his pipe, and his bag, and his brandy and water. Brag sat up and reconnoitred the giant, who was shaking his jacket and preparing to make "snug for the night." Having scanned the size and power of his companion, his next step was out of his comfortable nest.

"Dat's right," said Harridick; "go if you like, and leaf it all do me,—I'm not do be driftled mid."

Finding remonstrance hopeless and resistance impossible, Jack huddled on his clothes in the corner, and when Fanny returned with

the North-Sea trader's little comforts, he was prepared to announce to her his determination of giving up the whole of the accommodation to the newly arrived guest, and passing the night upon the short horse-hair sofa which stood in his sitting-room—an announcement which, in order to convince both the maid and the trader that he was not terrified into a removal, he made to the former in the civilest possible manner.

"I'm zorry do durn you out, my vrend," said Harridick; "you are bot a liddle yellow, and dere voud haf been blenty of room for poth of os."

"You are extremely welcome," said Jack; "in course if you have not been in bed for three weeks, it must be of much greater consequence to *you* than *me*;—so—Fanny dear, give me a light, and I'll make myself as snug as I can down stairs."

"Coot night, coot night, my liddle vrend," said Harridick; "I'll too as moch vor you menever you are apoard mein prig in de Nord Zea."

"I wish with all my heart and soul you were there now," said Jack to himself. "Good night, sir,—come, light me down, Fanny."

Accordingly Fanny did as she was bid, and Jack found himself again deposited in his sitting-room. Here he enquired whether he could have a cloak or two, a blanket, or a covering of some kind, to protect him from the chilliness of the night; and his request was answered by the landlady in person, who in bringing up several articles of warm clothing, expressed her regret that he should have been so inconvenienced.

"Why," said Jack, "I must say, to *me*, used as in course I am to every sort of luxury and comfort, it *is* rather hard; but the gentleman — is tired — and so —"

"Yes, sir," said the landlady, "but he should not have interfered with you, only you gave him leave, as my maid tells me, to share your accommodation: indeed, it was Fanny who first thought of asking you; for says she to me, 'Mam,' says she, 'the London gentleman is so very little, there'll be plenty of room

for Mr. Harridick ;' and all our other beds, you see, sir, is quite full."

" I am much obliged to Fanny for the notion," said Jack ; " I certainly did not think—I — however —"

" Oh, sir," said the landlady, " if it hadn't been with your own consent, nobody should have put you out of your room. I 'm sure I hope you won't catch cold, or feel any other inconvenience by sleeping here — and I 'm humbly obliged to you for your consideration :— will you take anything, sir, before you settle yourself ?"

" Don't care if I do," said Jack, " a glass of brandy and water, same as the last,— hot, strong, and sweet, eh !—I'm deuced shivery."

" I 'll send it you directly, sir," said the landlady, quite delighted at having so far soothed her guest—" Good night, sir."

" Good night," said Jack. Casting his eyes round the room, which looked as cheerless as might be ; and having reflected for three or four minutes upon the consequences likely to result from his own estimate of his lady-kill-

ing qualities, a gentle tap at the door announced that

———“the drink was ready.”

“Come in,” said Jack — and again appeared before him the gentle Fanny with a smoking tumbler of the desired beverage, which she deposited on the table.

“So, Miss Fanny,” said Jack, “it was you who foisted that sea-monster upon me, was it?”

“Sea-monster! sir,” said Fanny.

“Yes, Mr. Harridick, as you call him,” said Jack.

“He is no monster, sir,” said Fanny, “but a very kind-hearted gentleman, and one of my mistress’s best customers.”

“I didn’t think you would play me such a trick as that,” said Jack, looking tenderly and plaintively at the girl:—“the only thing you can do by way of compensation is, to come and sit with me for an hour or two, and tell me all your own history — eh! — and then I’ll make it up with you, smack smooth, and no mistake.”

“Sit up! sir,” said Fanny — “Lord bless you! sir — why, it’s just twelve o’clock: we

are all in bed here by twelve. I sleep with my mistress, and she's waiting for me now."

"I say, Fanny," said Brag, somewhat emphatically —

"Come, Fanny—Fanny," said a voice outside the half-open door, and which Jack recognised as that of the landlady.

"Coming, ma'am," replied the girl — "coming this minute. Good night, sir!"

"Good night!" said Jack, in a subdued tone.

The girl retired, the door closed, and the last sound Jack heard was a duet of suppressed laughter performed in the passage by the maid and the mistress, in which the voice of the former considerably predominated.

There are sounds to which men sometimes love to shut their ears ; Jack, however, could not muster up a sufficient stock of dyscecea to answer his purpose. What could they be laughing at ? — at the sea-monster perhaps, thought Jack ; there was nothing else ridiculous, that he could discover ; and so in no very good humour the little man rolled himself up for the

night in a boat-cloak which evidently had not long been home from a voyage.

In the morning everything was naturally as uncomfortable as anything well could be, and Jack, looking about wistfully for his *valise*, began sorely to repent that he had not taken up his abode at "The Three Kings," or some of the more substantial inns of the place, where he would certainly not have been subjected to such an intrusion and expulsion as those which he had so incautiously brought upon himself. Having got up, just as he lay down, he rang the bell, and enquired whether he should be able to use his last night's room for dressing; to which Fanny, the cruel fair, replied in the affirmative—that Mr. Harridick was up, and coming down almost directly, and she would just "put the things a little to rights," and let Jack know when it was ready.

There was nothing in all this, to soothe or console our hero, who could not divest himself of that nervous, aching, sinking feeling, which seems almost miraculously to announce the falling of some heavy blow. He could not

account for the sensation, except indeed that with the day had come upon him the reflection, that, besides making himself extremely uncomfortable during the night, he had made himself rather ridiculous into the bargain. However, a few hours would extricate him from his worries ; he would be cracking his jokes under the patronage of Lord Tom ; and as for the North-Sea trader, as he had, under an erroneous impression, given him permission to accommodate himself, it was much better to concede the point upon an assumed principle of good-nature and consideration, than get into any personal altercation with a man whose place in society could not easily be defined.

While he was congratulating himself upon the success of his diplomacy, a knock at the door, louder than that in which the gentle Fanny announced her presence, startled him ; and the permission " Come in " being uttered, the door opened, and Mr. Slush Van Harridick presented himself to Jack's astonished eyes.

" Cood mornin do you," said Harridick ; " I ope you zlept mell."

"Good morning, sir," said Jack : — "slept like a top, as you say — warm, snug, and comfortable ; couldn't be better ; all smack smooth, and no mistake."

"I only looked in," said the trader, "joost do dell you dat de zea-monster has done tressing, and your room is at your zervice — eh — dat is all. And now, liddle man, de zea-monster is going to git his prakfast."

Saying which, Harridick shut the door, and calmly walked away, singing a line of a popular Dutch song, which sounded most discordant to Jack's ears, who was now perfectly satisfied that every word which he had, as he thought privately and confidentially whispered to Fanny, had been by *her* communicated to his ursine rival ; and that in escaping the vengeance of Scylla Brown at Dover, he had run into still greater peril by having offended Charybdis Harridick at Deal, and so got himself, according to his own phraseology, "out of the frying-pan into the fire."

Shaftesbury says : — "The passion of fear (as a modern philosopher informs me) deter-

mines the spirits of the muscles of the knees, which are instantly ready to perform their motion by taking up the legs with incomparable celerity, in order to remove the body out of harm's way." Now although it would be unfair and unjust to attribute to any apprehension of consequences, on the part of Mr. Brag, the resolution at which he suddenly arrived, of not stopping any longer where he was, and the immovable determination he made to depart forthwith; certain it is that he did so resolve and determine, upon the ground that he had been ill-used, imposed upon, turned out of his bed, and generally outraged by the mistress of the house and her handmaiden.

Accordingly Brag, when he had finished his toilette, or, as he generally pronounced it, "twilight," rang the bell and ordered his bill, giving at the same time a negative to the question if he would have breakfast served. The tone in which this negative was given, and the dignified air which accompanied it, satisfied poor Fanny that her day of influence was over; and when the account was produced and paid,

with the smallest possible gratuity for herself, Brag, boiling with rage and indignation, qualified in a certain degree by his anxiety to escape any farther parley with Harridick, quitted the house, bearing in his hand the valise in which his cap, comb, and the rest of his portable comforts for one day's use had been stowed.

Thus loaded, he emerged from the lane in which, for the benefit of the sea-view (his room facing the street) he had immured himself, and walked on to "The Three Kings," where enquiring the hour at which the first coach to Dover would start, he ordered breakfast, having first asked whether the waiter had seen Mr. Brag's servant anywhere about.

Of course the man said no—inasmuch as servant there was none.

"Then," said Brag, "I have no doubt he drove on last night: never mind, the coach will do."

Jack, whatever might have been the real source of his anxiety to quit his late residence, felt comparatively happy in his new *locale*.

The house was a good one ; there was an air of cleanliness and cheerfulness about it ; the weather was fine, the sun shone brightly, and his happiness was complete, when, as the waiter was putting down the breakfast, he replied to the question, “ What steamer is that smoking in the distance ? ” — “ The Dover boat, sir, for Calais.”

“ To-day’s paper, sir,” said the waiter, presenting a copy of “ The Dover Telegraph.”

“ Thank you ! ” said Jack, with a princely affability of manner, and forthwith he began his morning meal, alternately cutting, spreading, sweetening, pouring out, and reading, with a mind perfectly at ease. A new cloud, however, rose on the horizon, which threatened the neutralization of the delight which he had just received from the distant smoke of “ The Ferret,” in the shape of the following account of the grounding of the brig at the back of the pier, which stared him in the face in large letters under the head of “ Local News.”

“ The night before last, the brig Rose, from Falmouth to this port, missed the entrance of

the harbour, owing to the strength of the gale, and got on shore at the back of the pier. Great apprehensions were entertained for her safety : three of the crew swam on shore, but were severely injured on the shingles by the sea, which ran so high that no assistance could be offered her. About half-past nine a communication was made with the brig by means of a hawser. Lieutenant Brunt, of the royal navy, who happened to be on the spot, seized the first moment to dash through the surf, and at the imminent hazard of his life succeeded in bringing ashore two female passengers, a lady and her daughter, who, by the occasional gleams of moonlight were discernible lashed to one of the masts of the vessel, making signs of distress and supplication. This is the second instance in which Lieutenant Brunt has signalised himself in a similar manner. Three men have been unfortunately lost, but as the weather has moderated, it is thought the brig may be ultimately got off."

" There's a go," said Jack to himself, — " I wish we had been off to France yesterday—

now that's clear contradiction to my story—I saw him do it—didn't look like a lieutenant—pooh!—deuce take it—that's bad again—no sooner out of one scrape than into another." In fact, Jack, like all pretenders, was perpetually dancing the tight rope in constant fear of a tumble. In the present case his fate was certain, for there were but two female passengers on board the brig, and but one man on shore to save both.

Perhaps Lord Tom might not see the paper, or, if he did, might not read the account of the brig; at all events, it was no use discounting misadventures: when they came due, if they were presented, or presented themselves, it was time enough to meet them:—and so Jack read the sporting news, and the London news, and finished his breakfast. Having discovered that the coach would be up in a few minutes, his old failing overcame him.

"Waiter," said Jack.

"Yes, sir."

"Does the coach, in going through Walmer, go near the Castle?" said Jack.

"Passes the end of the road leading down to it, sir," said the man.

"Oh!" said Jack, affecting to consider, "I must go to Dover first, but I think my man may have taken the phaeton direct to Walmer."

"Oh, sir," said the waiter, at once impressed, as Jack meant he should be, with the idea that he was going on a visit to the Castle, "I dare say the coachman would stop while somebody ran down and enquired."

"No, no," said Jack, "it does not signify, if he is not there, he has probably gone through to Dover himself,—it will be all right in the end, and no mistake."

In a few moments the coach drove up; the instant it stopped, the waiter, anxious to be most active in the service of the guest, whose destination he flattered himself he had discovered, ran into the room to inform him that one of the duke's servants, who had come from the Castle early in the morning, was going back, and would, perhaps, be able to give some information on the subject.

This was a staggerer.

"No, no," said Jack, "*he could not know,* because I did not expect my man so soon — no, — no — never mind."

Jack's distress when he beheld, during the packing of some parcels into the boot of the coach, the said waiter in close conversation with the aforesaid servant, may well be imagined; and the fact that the aforesaid servant occupied an outside place, rendered it absolutely necessary, in order to avoid any farther explanation, that Jack himself should proceed, inside. He accordingly enquired if there were room, and was answered in the affirmative. In he jumped, valise and all, having the whole interior of the coach, entirely to himself. In a few minutes he was again in motion, the coachman having received directions to take up one, at "The Standard."

Jack did not feel himself at all at his ease about his last effort at dignity:—his name he had given—the total absence of servant or equipage might lead to further enquiries and discoveries, and he get more deeply involved in intricacies and embarrassments. However,

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast,"

and Jack still fancied something more agreeable might turn up in his little journey. The passenger to be taken up at the Standard might be one of the female sex, who by her kindness and sociability might make amends for the treachery of Fanny and the incivility of her mistress. There was even yet a chance of an adventure — of some event which, if it came off, triumphantly, might weigh in the opposite scale against his defeats and discomfitures.

As the coach rattled along, towards Walmer, Jack took all his customary precautions of running his fingers through his curls, pulling up his shirt collars, and setting himself generally in order, so that, when the vehicle stopped at the corner where the roads divide, he was all prepared for conquest. Open went the door, down went the steps, and Jack, longing as he was to behold his coming victim, considered it more becoming his dignity to affect a perfect indifference, and therefore kept his eyes filled with an expression of military interest towards the gates of the Barrack-yard, until he felt the inclination of the carriage to the weight

of the entering passenger, when, turning carelessly “as it were” round to meet, as he hoped, the responsive glance of some Walmer beauty, he beheld squeezing himself into the narrow-door of the coach, enveloped in an immensely thick great coat, his dread and abomination, Mr. Sluys Van Harridick.

Jack then thought that his measure of calamities was full even to overflowing.

“ Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm’d rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger,
Take any shape but that”—

said Macbeth, and thought John Brag, Esq.—
What ! had he waylaid him to revenge himself
for the insults offered him ? or was he doomed
to his society to Dover by mere accident ?—
what was it ?—”

“ Ah ! ” cried Harridick, the moment he had succeeded in establishing himself in possession of nearly three-fourths of the coach ; “ Vot ! here agin,— vy I dought you vas gone—I no zee you to prakfast — here is your zea mon-ster come do dravel mid you to Tover.”

“ I’m delighted,” said Jack, looking parsnips.
“ I spect do vind my prig at Tover,” said

Harridick, who seemed by his manner either not to comprehend the compliment of being called a sea monster, in the full acceptation of the words, or to treat the intended affront of his companion with sovereign contempt,—“ I lantert at Teal pecause I like Teal,—I haf known de lanlaty vor dventy years, ant her hosbond beforr her— zo I alvays gets ashore dere—to get my znooze, and leaf my mate do get de prig into de harbor.”

“ Oh !” said Jack, “ then you stay at Dover while the brig is there.”

“ Do be zure I too,” said Harridick, “ and alldow I am zea monster, I zshall be doo happy do zee you on poard and plow you out mid znaps.”

“ You are very kind, sir,” said Jack, still doubting whether he was in earnest in his civility, or indeed, whether being “ blown out with snaps” meant anything hospitable and civil, or exactly the reverse.

“ As ve are alone,” said Harridick, “ I zuppoze you mill haf no hopjeckSION do my avving a whiff. I haf no bipe, bot I aff

ghiroots mid amadow do light him mid—
mill you aff von, mid me?"

"No," said Jack; "none, I thank you:
—but, pray do you smoke if you like."

"I mean do too zo," said Sluys, opening a box of particularly fine cigars, striking a light, and methodically beginning his exercise, to the utter confusion of Jack, who knew that by the time he should arrive at "The Ship," he should be awfully redolent of the fumes of tobacco, before noon.

At this moment the coach stopped to set down the Duke's servant, who, having been informed by the waiter that the little gentleman with the visionary servant and imaginary phaeton seemed to be going to the Castle, came to the window, touched his hat, and asked whether he should say anything to his man if the carriage had arrived there.

"No," said Jack, "thank you—no—I shall be back by dinner-time—if I can get back in time—I—"

"His Grace isn't here, sir," said the servant;
"only if—"

"No, no," said Jack, "I know—no, no—it's of no consequence; I dare say my man is gone on to Dover—thank you—much obliged to you."

The servant again touched his hat, and retired. "All's right" was the word, and away went the happy couple of "insides."

It was, it must be confessed, a great comfort, or, as Jack would have called it, "an 'appy release," that Harridick, who had not during the night sufficiently

"Unfatigued himself with gentle slumbers," still felt drowsy; so that, ere the tip of his first cigar had faded into ashy paleness, he had himself subsided into a nap, which greatly relieved his companion from his apprehensions with regard to consequences, and left him luckily in ignorance of the name of his "prig," to which otherwise he might have felt himself bound to pay a visit. The nap continued until they reached the turning near Dover Castle, when Brag stopped the coach, and indicated his desire to walk down into the town by the short cut, ordering the coachman to send his valise into "The Ship" as soon as he ar-

rived. By this manœuvre Jack contrived to escape from the caravan without waking the bear, and without farther cementing an acquaintance with one from whom, the moment his dread and apprehension of him were overcome, he entertained the most unqualified aversion.

Away bounded Jack, along the side of the hill, until, carefully avoiding "The Three Mackerels," he cut through the intervening streets, and *via* Snargate reached his inn, where his first enquiries were naturally directed as to the position of Lord Tom: Lord Tom was on the pier. Of course, or, as Jack had it, "in course," thither Jack repaired; and, sure enough, there he found his lordship, amidst a crowd of persons of all sorts and conditions, who were anxiously watching the process of warping off the unfortunate brig, of which we have already heard so much.

Jack was rather sorry that the brig—or, as Sluys Von Harridick would have called it, "the prig"—was the leading object of the day, inasmuch as it might lead to a discussion with the young lord as to the para-

graph, which had caught his eye, at Deal. However, Jack proceeded to join his lordship, who was leaning over the parapet between two ladies utterly unknown to our hero.

"Ah, Jack!" said Lord Tom, in a tone not quite like that which Jack had been used to — "so, you are come back. 'The Ferret' is gone —eh?"

"I know, my lord," said Jack.

"You are just in time," said his lordship : — "this must be a most interesting sight for *you*. Why, it could have been no easy work to get aboard that unfortunate craft by a hawser in the gale of the night before last."

"No," said Jack, "I never said it was. The rope was as slippery as an eel ; and I'm sure, now I look at it, I wonder how the deuce it was done, only when a man makes up his mind, he don't stick at trifles." The reader will please to observe that Jack's tone was somewhat altered — he now put the case hypothetically.

"I suppose," said Lord Tom, "you mean

to enquire after the ladies whom you rescued ;
rely upon it, they will not be ungrateful."

" Not I," said Jack, " I leave all that to fate. I'm satisfied with having done my little all ; I never make mountains of mole-hills."

" Then," said Lord Tom, " I positively declare you do yourself the greatest possible injustice, and I will not be so careless a friend as to suffer you to 'hide your candle under a bushel.'"

" My what !" said Jack in an agony. The shop—the moulds, the sixes and tens, all blazing at once in his mind's eye.

" By your candle," said Lord Tom, " I mean your talent and intrepidity. Permit me to present you to the two ladies whom, at the hazard of your life, you preserved—Mrs. and Miss Mervyn — who, I am sure, will be too happy to award you all the gratitude which you deserve."

The ladies turned round, as if preconcertedly, and — more shame be to them ! — burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.

"I don't understand this," said Jack, who, on the contrary, understood it perfectly.

"Nor I, sir," said the elder lady of the two. "That we were miraculously saved — at least from what, at the moment, we thought inevitable destruction, is most true; but it is to this gentleman we owe our preservation," — (drawing forward a short, stubby, thick-whiskered man, whom Jack in a moment recognised as having seen on the beach,) — "Mr. Brunt."

"Ha, ha!" said Jack: "that's the way, ma'am, some men get credit for what other men have done."

"I recollect you, sir," said Lieutenant Brunt. "I saw you — stood next you on the beach — and, I dare say, you recollect me. I remember your kindness in offering to hold my cloak when I started upon my hurried voyage, or whatever it might be called."

"By Jove!" said Lord Tom, calling the attention of his party to a great effort made by the men who had the hawser round the capstan to get the brig off — "she will be saved yet!"

The relief that this change of conversation afforded Jack, was more than compensated by the evident change which he so clearly observed in his friend Lord Tom's manner; and affecting to be extremely anxious to get a "good look" at the operation in progress, he fidgeted himself away as far as possible from Mrs. and Miss Mervyn and the odious lieutenant, whose exertions it was perfectly true he had witnessed, and, like a simpleton, had appropriated to himself.

What was he to do:—remain, and battle it out; or go to "The Ship," and wait the result? He felt that he had certainly carried the joke a little too far, but how to retrace his steps he did not exactly see. How on earth could Lord Tom have got acquainted with the two women who were saved, and who, instead of being two beautiful girls ready to eat him up for his gallant exertions in their rescue from a watery grave, were mother and daughter, neither beautiful, nor ever having been so! but then, "Master Shallow owed him a thousand pounds:" that was

his stay—his prop—his support—his safeguard and security.

Fortified by this consideration, he remained on the pier, and eventually rejoined the party. The attempt to get the brig off succeeded ; she floated, and was soon afterwards towed into the harbour. The ladies and their preserver took their leave of Lord Tom, but without bestowing the slightest notice upon Jack, who cowered beneath the glance of his lordship, who, to his mingled surprise, gratification, and regret, never uttered another syllable upon the subject. Lord Tom walked towards “The Ship ;” so did Jack — on a parallel line : but Lord Tom took no more notice of him than if he had been a stock or a stone. They reached the inn door ; Lord Tom entered the house ; Jack, as usual, followed him, — but Lord Tom made no sign ; and the first mark of recognition which he received was, to his utter horror and amazement, from Lord Ilfracombe, who meeting him in the hall declared himself quite delighted at renewing the acquaintance so propitiously begun at “The Duke of

Marlborough" near Wigglesford a few weeks before.

Brag was now completely taken aback. The chilling coldness of Lord Tom's reception in the first instance struck him hard; the contemptuous manner in which the rescued ladies treated him, hit him harder in the second; but he was so extremely vain and silly, that even after all these indications, he was not able to make up his mind whether Lord Ilfracombe were in earnest or jest when he so warmly expressed his gratification at again meeting him.

Still more was he puzzled when his lordship invited him to luncheon,—a part of the plan which he had preconcerted, and which, as his lordship did not then know of the last exposure of Jack's humbug with regard to saving the lives of the ladies in the brig, he still resolved upon carrying into effect. That affair, however, in conjunction with a letter Lord Tom had received from London, touching the double offer and rejection of Mrs. Dallington and Blanche Englefield, had determined his lordship to eject him in a

much less ceremonious manner ; but as Lord Ilfracombe knew nothing of this, he insisted upon Jack's coming up-stairs, under the arrangement into which he had previously entered with his nephew.

Jack, who took the whole thing *de bonne foi*, screwed up his curls and settled his collars as usual, and accompanied the earl to one of the drawing-rooms where luncheon had been put down ; (after which the party, excepting Lord Tom, were to start for Canterbury, see its antiquities, and sleep, on their way to London ;) and was, by his lordship, ushered into the apartment, in which he found, assembled together, Lady Ilfracombe, Lord and Lady Dawlish, and Lady Fanny Smartly.

Lady Fanny, Jack knew by sight, her ladyship being a pre-eminent equestrian of the equestrian order ; but the other ladies he did not recognise, although he concluded that the elder lady was my lord's wife. The other couple, although they were of the party which picked up the earl at "The Duke of Marlborough," he did not at the moment recollect.

“Lady Ilfracombe,” said the earl, “let me present Mr. Brag to you—a great friend of Tom’s, who will be here presently—and with whom I passed a remarkably pleasant hour or two on that wet day when you discovered me in my shelter from the rain.”

“Ah!” thought Jack, “then he remembers it all: what will happen next!—perhaps he has forgotten some of it—perhaps, if he has not forgotten, he forgives. What I’m to do, I don’t know—I’m in for it; and so here goes, and no mistake.”

“That *was* a dreadful wet day, my lord,” said Jack; “I had no idea at the time whom I had the honour of speaking to, but when one is at an inn whatever comes uppermost comes out—and—I—dare say I talked a little too fast.”

“Not a bit,” said the earl. “My great object, besides the pleasure of having your society at luncheon and gratifying Tom, is to undeceive you as to our real characters. We are not the ‘kill-joys and wet-blankets’ you take us for.” —Come, Lady Ilfracombe, let us sit down;

Tom will be here immediately,— we have no time to lose."

The bell was rung, the servants appeared, the little party were soon seated; but before fork had assailed a chicken's breast, or knife been flourished over it, Lord Tom himself entered the room evidently excited.

" My lord," said Lord Tom, " addressing himself to the earl, " I feel it my duty to undeceive you, as I am myself undeceived, in the character of a person in this room, who is only protected by being in it, in the character of my uncle's guest. He has now the assurance to sit down in the presence of Lady Fanny Smartly, with whom he claimed to you a personal intimacy; he has the impudence to sit next Lady Dawlish, my cousin, whose person he ridiculed without being acquainted with it; he libelled you, sir, without ever having seen you; and, in short has exhibited himself in the most contemptible possible character. This, at your lordship's desire, I would have overlooked, in order to carry on the jest a little further, and have had the satisfaction of marching him out

with all the honours of ridicule ; but circumstances have come to my knowledge this day which render it my duty to insist upon his instantly quitting this room. How he has the audacity to sit down in the society of ladies whom he has vilified, and of men whom he has aspersed, it is for him to decide ; but since I have had the misfortune of associating him in the slightest degree with my family,—which be it observed, I have carefully abstained from doing, whenever it was possible, — I feel it due to them to evince my feelings by desiring, or, if necessary, by ordering him out."

" My dear Tom !" said Lord Ilfracombe, — and the ladies looked aghast.

" Come, sir !" said Lord Tom ; — " I have to apologize, my dear aunt, for this course, but it is the only one ; — walk out — with me, if you please, sir."

" Oh !" said Jack, rising from his seat, " in course ; if your lordship goes out too, there can be no difficulty whatsoever — only I don't understand — I know something which may, perhaps, make a difference."

"Whatever difference there is between us, sir," said Lord Tom, "shall be settled immediately."

"My dear Tom," said Lady Ilfracombe,— "what do you mean?"

"Nothing to be alarmed about, my dear madam," said Tom. "I shall be back in five minutes at the farthest."

Lord Ilfracombe, who had really intended to have a good joke out of the affair, and have regularly presented Jack by degrees to Lady Dawlish, the "winky-eyed, waxy doll of the toy-shop," and the "monstrous bore" Dawlish, and so on, until he had shamed him laughingly out of his absurd propensity to talk big, was seriously vexed at the manner in which his nephew had lost his temper and taken the matter up; but the truth really was, that the conduct of the man had grown unbearable. The scandal of the affair in London had made him ridiculous beyond measure, and the last event of the preservation of the distressed "females" crowned the whole.

Jack certainly felt extremely awkward in

getting up from the table at which he had placed himself so comfortably ; but, embarrassing as was the movement, he still chuckled at the thought of having Lord Tom in Dover gaol before sunset : he never travelled without his lordship's I. O. U.'s carefully deposited in a Russia leather pocket-book ; and his lordship, as he felt, might be secure that if *he* did not ride his lordship's horses at Paris on the next Sunday, his lordship would not be at Paris to see them run.

When Jack rose, which he found inevitable,—for, spite of Lord Ilfracombe and the compassionate ladies, Tom was inexorable,—he said,

“ Well, — I didn't expect this — I was asked by Lord Ilfracombe to luncheon — I did not force myself here ; — and I *do* think — considering — however — I say nothing ; — but in the presence of females — I do not think this altogether proper ; — however, ‘ might overcomes right ’ — and I — can only — add — I wish your lordship and the ladies a good morning. It is hard treatment, but I'll be even with somebody that you may rely upon, and no mistake.”

"Now, Mr. Brag," said Lord Tom when they left the apartment, "just step into this room, and hear what I have to say."

"Oh, in course," said Jack.

"From the time I first made your acquaintance on the course at Epsom, I always treated you like a gentleman," said Lord Tom; "I introduced you to my friends—you lived with me—I took you to Mrs. Dallington's—all that story, sir, I have heard. You meet my uncle accidentally—you vilify him to his face, traduce me and the ladies of my family. You render me ridiculous wherever I take you—you insult everybody you come near—and you wind up with telling me a distinct and deliberate falsehood with regard to your exploits in saving two ladies the night before last, whose faces you did not even know when you saw them this morning. All this you do. Now, I only ask you, can you be surprised that I am in the highest degree enraged with you?"

"Not a bit," said Jack; "I dare say you are very right, and I am very wrong: but you forget, my Lord Tom, one part of the story—I mean the money you have borrowed of me;—if

that has slipped *your* memory, it has not slipped *mine*, — and I will take care that you shall not slip *me*, for, by Job —”

“ Don’t make a noise, sir,” said Lord Tom ; “ give me back my *bons* or whatever securities you have of mine, and I’ll pay you down every shilling upon that account ; and thank you, not only for the accommodation you have afforded me, but for the lesson you have taught me, as to making friendships, which I shall not, I think, easily forget.”

“ What ! are you going to pay me ? ” said Jack.

“ To the last farthing, sir,” said Lord Tom.

“ Why, then,” said Jack, “ that’s more than I ever expected. I’ve got your *bons* and your I. O. U.’s all here in my pocket-book. Stop,—let’s see ; there—”

“ Take your time,” said Lord Tom ; “ I don’t want to hurry you.”

“ There,” said Jack ; “ two hundred and twenty — one hundred and ten — one hundred. That’s all.”

“ Four hundred and thirty pounds,” said Lord Tom.

"Exactly so," said Jack; "but I say—I won't take a cheque."

"But you *will* be impertinent," replied my lord. "Here, sir; here are the four hundred and thirty pounds in bank-notes. Count them, sir; look at them."

"It's all right, and no mistake," said Jack, looking over the paper.

"Here perish all my *bons!*" said Lord Tom, tearing them up, "and, I hope, with them, all my absurdities. To be sure, I am easily deceived."

"Yes, very; you are what I call, as innocent as a lamb," said Jack. "Stories *may* come out. I say nothing."

"Do you mean to insinuate?" said his lordship.

"I insinuate nothing," said Jack, "but I wish you a very good day. Boaster and humbug as you call me, I've done one thing today that would puzzle a philosopher. I'll be hanged if I haven't got four hundred and thirty pounds out of an empty pocket! That's what I call coming it strong. I've lost the

honour of your lordship's acquaintance,—that 's a misfortune ; but I 've got my money back, and that 's a capital set-off *per contra*, and no mistake."

" With this moment, sir, all connexion between us ceases," said Lord Tom.

" Thank you, my lord," said Jack ; " good morning !"

Lord Tom, who was exceedingly agitated during this burst, returned to the drawing-room, and the reproaches of the ladies for his cruelty towards the little man ; and Brag, the moment his lordship had disappeared, leaned over the balusters and cried in a loud and commanding tone—

" Waiter !"

" Yes, sir ?"

" Order me a chaise and four to Hythe directly."

" Yes, sir."

" And"—in a louder tone of voice—" bring me my bill—a bottle of soda-water, and change for a hundred-pound note !"

CHAPTER V.

WHILE these events were occurring on the sea-shore, matters were progressing, as the Americans have it, in the metropolis, and the two pair of lovers enjoying a felicity to which, spite of all their inclinations and affections, they had previously been strangers. Rushton, taught by the precepts and encouraged by the practice of Sir Charles, began to think that a woman might be lively without being vicious, sad without thinking of his rivals, and civil to her acquaintance without being a coquette; while Sir Charles, assured of Mrs. Dallington's esteem, began to appreciate the merits of her character, and understand, which to him were before incomprehensible, the fluctuations of spirits and variation of temper which he had frequently remarked, but which, until the recent *éclaircissement* took place, he never sus-

pected to have their origin in his own coldness and apparent indecision.

Out of evil comes good ; and, whatever faults Mr. Brag possessed, he certainly had the merit of bringing matters in the Dallington family to a crisis. The double marriage already began to be spoken of, and hints were even given upon the subject in the fashionable intelligence of the *Morning Post*.

Of the other party, the Browns and Meads, we know enough for the present ; they are on their way to Paris, as happy as may be, having left Mrs. Brown the elder, who declined the tour, at the doctor's house in Burlington Gardens, where she was to reside, even after her daughter's return from the Continent, which could not long be delayed, in consequence of Mead's professional engagements in London.

While these quieter persons are moving regularly in their proper spheres, it becomes our duty to regard the movements of the exploded Jack, with the same sort of attention which we bestow upon the wrigglings and twistings of the animalculæ in the great microscope, the

natural insignificance of which render the development of their limbs and motions matters of interest, being such as to leave their distinctive characteristics perfectly invisible to the naked eye.

The bill was scarcely paid, and the change settled, before Jack's terribly alarming post-chaise and four rattled up to the street-door of "The Ship," making the cliffs reverberate with its clatter, and —

" — the very stones prate at its whereabouts."

Open flew the door — bang went the steps — pop went the cork of the bottle of soda-water — down went the draught at full speed, nearly choking the patient, or rather the impatient, with its effervescence — and at three skips and a jump the little man sprang into the "carriage," and throwing himself into one of its corners, as if anxious to conceal himself from the anxious gaze of the public, not one of whom was looking at him, away he went, boiling with rage and foaming with vexation, and resolved to pay Lord Tom off in his own coin, and no mistake.

Little did the furious John know what he was driving to; little did he anticipate what was to happen to him at Eastbourn, which was his eventual place of destination, or what strange events his sudden dismissal from the friendship of Lord Tom was to bring about. The immediate purpose of his soul was to reach Hastings that night, in time to despatch a letter to his mother, directing her *not* to direct his letters to Paris.

Arrived at Hythe, Jack's fever had by no means subsided; yet, upon ascertaining the hour at which the post left Hastings, and feeling certain, since he did not mean to "carry on" with four horses, that he should not arrive there in time to despatch his filial epistle by the night's mail, he resolved to rest for an hour or two where he was, until he saw the boys returning with the chaise to Dover, so that by no means it might be discovered that he had discarded his leaders, (as men sometimes in a pet, feel very much inclined to do,)—and that he might have time to write his letter, which he did, in the following terms :—

“ White Hart, Hythe,
“ MY DEAR MOTHER, Thursday evening.

“ I wrote to you yesterday from Deal; and, as Jem Salmon would say, a deal has been doing since I wrote. After having seen Brown and his new wife, and having been bullied, as I told you, by the doctor to whom that snivelling Nance is married, I thought there was an end; so in course, I went back as soon as the smoke of the Ferret, the steamer in which they crossed, told me they were off. I had a very pleasant ride to Dovor, for I had made an acquaintance with an uncommon gentlemanly man, a captain of a Dutch man-of-war lying off that port, with whom I was so much pleased that I gave him up my sleeping-room, which in course was the crack apartment of the hotel where I lodged. So, in the morning, he would insist upon attending me back. Indeed, it was generally supposed I was going on a visit to the Castle; and it was with great trouble I undeceived them, for, being so much with the nobility in these parts, in course they

took for granted ten thousand things which one can't help."

" Well, when I arrived at Dovor," for so Mr. Brag thought it uncommonly smart, to spell it, " I found Lord Tom with a couple of females talking, on the pier, which somehow I did not like;—I am, my dear mother, very particular in that respect; — so, directly I saw it, I said to Lord Tom, ' Tom,' says I, ' this won't do before people of character,' and that kind of thing—and so I walks right away.

" Well, up I goes to 'The Ship';—that's the inn here, the only place a man of any character can go to, and where in course I am uncommon well known;—and who should I see there but old Ilfracombe, Tom's uncle,—a kind of a bore of a lord whom I have always made a point of shirking, with his wife, and son, and daughter-in-law, and a Lady Fanny Smartly, which rides in the Park. So when I goes in—' Jack,' says my lord, ' I 'm delighted to see you. Where's Tom?' meaning Lord Tom Towzle, which is his nephew. Says I, ' My lord, I can't say; I have left him on the pier with

two rum ones.' Upon which my lord says, 'Never mind *him*; come up and have some luncheon.' I said, 'My Lord,' says I, 'I never lunches.' But that war'nt no go; he would not have it at no price. 'Come along, Jack,' says he, and up he drags me, smack smooth into the room with all his relations, and no mistake. I'd rather have been in a pigstye; however, Lady Dawlish and Lady Fanny smothered me with kindness, and I was forced to sit down and sham eating; which, in course, I did.

"Well! in comes Lord Tom; and he was in a regular humour because I would not speak to the two promiscuous females which he was parading about with. So I stands no nonsense, but ups to him in a minute, like a game cock, before the females and all, and just gave him as good as he could bring. I told him my mind, and pitched into him about the money he owed me. Had him there!—in course he couldn't stump a dump: so I just shook my whip—it was my little whip—right before him, and I says, 'Good by'e, my lord! When you learn manners, we associate together again;

for the present I cut you,—not with *this*,’ says I, shaking my little Crowther again right in his face; ‘but the next time I see you, by Job I’ll have my money out of you!’ With that, he walked away just like a dog with his tail what the soldiers call countermarched; a regular try-back, and run into the kennel amongst the females of his family.

“And see what a fool he is: I was to ride for him on the Champy Mas at Paris next Sunday—got my new jacket all ready:—and now he’ll lose that, and no mistake. So instead of stepping over the herring-pond, I am going to Eastbourne, which is a nice, retired place, and where I hope you will send me down fifty or a hundred pounds; for to tell you, my dear mother, the plain truth,—I’m stumped. So don’t forget, and direct to the hotel, Eastbourne.

“Yours affectionately,

“JOHN BRAG.

“P. S.—Tell me something about Kitty: I can’t make it out. Brown has got one child, and two carriages: — there’s a go!”

When he had written and sealed this, he enquired, as usual, of the waiter, the way to the Post-Office ; and having been properly directed, himself slipped his packet into the box. The epistle despatched, Jack got into his new chaise, and proceeded towards the place of his destination with a “ happy pair ” of posters.

It was lateish in the evening when he reached Hastings, and was driven to that admirable inn, “ The Swan,” which certainly combines all the attributes which a man does not require in a house of the sort at a watering-place. Jack, however, bundled out of his yellow-and-two, and being in no humour to soliloquize, betook himself to the ill-smelling coffee-room, and contented himself with ordering a bed, and—as he seldom failed to do—a preparatory glass of hot brandy and water. Dinner he had had none—(his appetite was not particularly sharp under all the circumstances)—but, by way of what he called a “ stay ” to his stomach, he told the waiter to bring him a sandwich—the only single word in the English language which comprehensively describes in a dissyl-

lable, dirt, butter, and mustard, laid between two bits of stale bread.

As for Hastings—Jack cared nothing. Whether it had been founded by Jack Hastings, the Danish pirate, or whether Athelstan had coined money in it, was all one to him:—Whether Robert, earl of Eu, or John de Dreux, had the better right to the castle, disturbed not Jack; nor, in the present temper of his mind, would he have cared one pin, if, after the French burned it in 1377, it had never been rebuilt. He was, as he told his mother, regularly “stumped”—not exactly in the way he wished to make her believe—but still, stumped he was: and perhaps never did little man experience fall so sudden or deep as that by which Jack had been afflicted during the last four-and-twenty hours.

It was impossible, however, for the little man to withstand the impulse of his inherent infirmity:—the old, stale, worn-out trick of asking after his servant and carriage, was again played off at “The Swan.”

“No, sir,” was, of course, the answer to

the enquiries if his man and phaeton had arrived.

"I told him to come here," said Jack, who, till he reached the place, did not even know that the sign of the inn was "The Swan."

"I'll send to enquire, sir," said an officious waiter; "he may have gone to some other house. What name shall I say?"

"Brag," said Jack; — "and, stay — if he should be at any other inn by mistake, tell him to bring me up the large leather case with my writing-desk, and the small one with my dressing-case — and the brown cloak lined with fur:—remember, the brown one—not the blue. — But I'd bet my life he has made some infernal mistake."

Away went the man. Jack had gratified his ruling passion, and again fell into no pleasing reverie.

It was in this state of mind that Jack sat looking at the "drink," which had been placed before him until his eyes seemed to swim in the glass. The time began to verge on nine o'clock when a sort of scuffling noise outside the coffee-

room door aroused his attention ; and turning his eyes to the source of the disturbance, he beheld a slim, pale, and what is called an “ interesting-looking” man, enter the room somewhat feebly, assiduously wrapped up in divers and sundry coats and cloaks ; his face peeping out from under a fanciful kind of foraging cap, overlaid by a pink silk handkerchief, looking like the pale queen of Night peeping to earth through some intervening clouds.

Jack saw that the approaching object was what he considered “uncommon genteel ;” and when it threw itself down upon a seat in a state of exhaustion, he began to think he had discovered somebody upon whom he might make an impression—in whom he might find an agreeable listener ; — which was, after all, *his* notion — when he could find one — of a pleasant companion.

“ Pay the chairmen,” said the stranger to the waiter, “ and tell Rummagee-Doss to bring me some Eau de Cologne.”

The waiter disappeared.

“ I beg your pardon, sir,” said the stranger

to Brag, “ but I am a sad invalid, — and so hipped and wretched — upon my life, I declare, I can’t tell how : — so low and miserable from ill health, that I prefer this corner of the coffee-room to any private room of my own—and, I am afraid, I cause a great deal of inconvenience. I declare, I wouldn’t for the world, if I—”

“ None in the least,” said Jack. “ Don’t mind *me*, sir ; I’m not particular any how : — take everything as it comes — straight up, right down, and no mistake.”

“ I have just arrived from India,” said the stranger. “ I never suffered anything like the wretchedness of the voyage : such a set of people ! — no sentiment — no delicacy about them ; —so rough and noisy,—and I so extremely indisposed ! — so, the moment I could, I got on shore here. The purser of the ship — a great coarse creature, who used to laugh all day long like a hyæna — landed here with letters and things, all about business, for those people in Leadenhall Street ; and so I — it was a very lucky chance — I said I would land here too :

—I brought nothing but half a dozen packages of things I wanted, and my man, Ruminagee-Doss, just to take care of me a little; —I only came ashore yesterday—and I have been to take a warm bath, and I feel a great deal better already ; for the nasty smell of the ship, and such a great deal of talking, and playing games and romps, and a parcel of women who had no sympathy for a sick creature like me, quite upset me, —I really never was so overcome in all my life !”

“ It must be a deuce of a bore,” said Jack, “ being boxed up for half a year in one of those great arks.”

“ Oh ! sir,” said the stranger, “ you have no idea of the misery of it ! — and the man — the captain — had nothing in the world to make one comfortable. He had tea, but no milk — his cow died ; and not a drop of lemonade was to be got — nothing but wine and beer, and those things, which one can’t drink you know — and no pastry after the first five weeks ! Oh ! if you knew what I have suffered, sir, you would excuse any little trouble I give.”

Hereabouts entered a fine-looking piece of



brown humanity, done up in muslin, with a high-caste yellow streak down his forehead, bearing a bottle of Eau de Cologne, who turned out to be Rummagée-Doss, the stranger's **Kitmagar**.

" You don't dislike *this*, do you, sir ?" said the stranger, holding up the Eau de Cologne bottle.

" On the contrary," said Jack, " quite the reverse, and no mistake."

" *Jou*," said the stranger, and the muslin and streak retired.

" That's a rummish cut of a toggery," said Jack, who had never seen an Oriental attendant before.

" A what ! " said the stranger.

" Curious dress," said Jack.

" Pretty and picturesque," said the stranger, " ill suited to this climate. I don't mean to keep him in England — he is an excellent creature—and so affectionate—I never saw so much kindness — all during my illness — so sick. I declare — well I never did—"

"I'm not used to that sort of thing," said Jack ; "however, if you are not going to turn in just yet, I'll order another glass of 'hot with' just to keep you company."

"Do,—you are so good," said the stranger, twisting himself about gracefully ; "I am sure we shall be great friends by and bye. I am going to have a little weak tea, and I have taken such a fancy to a raspberry tart, I think I shall indulge myself—for I am very unwell."

"Tea and tarts," said Jack, "that's what I call a queer cross; but I suppose you chaps from the East have a great many varieties of feed of which we know nothing."

"It is extremely agreeable there," said the stranger, "but I have such wretched health that I cannot enjoy anything."

At this period of the dialogue, the waiter arrived with a tray, on which a tea equipage was arranged, and sure enough, three raspberry tartlets, ovals of jam covered with a trellis of pastry, which might be heraldically described as "Gules, fretty of Or," but in which no rea-

sonable mortal — “not to speak it profanely,” above the age of thirteen, indulges in the way of eating. Jack looked, wondered at the taste of his companion, and ordered a replenishment of his glass.

“I shan’t discommode you,” said Jack, “shall I? — I’m not for late sitting, but, finding a gentleman to converse with, why, I think, eleven or so a goodish hour to turn in, and no mistake.”

“I shall be delighted,” said the stranger. “Oh dear! this tea is so strong — Qui hi — oh, I forget I am — Rummagee — oh dear dear. — Waiter” —

“Shall I ring the bell?” said Jack.

“Oh don’t let me trouble you, sir,” said the stranger.

The waiter luckily appeared — more grog was brought for Jack, and a little more hot water for his companion.

“Have you been long in India, sir?” said Jack — who began to feel his natural desire to “find out” anything come strongly upon him.

“Only a few years,” said the stranger. “I

did uncommonly well at first, for my mother, who is an excellent woman—indeed I don't know how to speak of her in terms strong enough, for I declare I never did see such a creature—got a friend of hers to put me on his staff."

"Oh!" said Jack, stirring his grog, but not at all comprehending the precise nature of the advantage to be derived from what appeared to him a very extraordinary position.

"But at last," said the stranger, "I could not bear the tyranny of the old creature of a general, so I left him and joined my regiment; but when I got to it, the sun was so hot, and the duty so hard, it was too much for me; so I got sick leave, and I must say I never saw such handsome treatment in my life; everybody—I declare they did—even nasty creatures whom I hated—all of them were ready to bear witness to my illness, and to get me home the very moment I expressed a desire that way."

It is a remarkable fact that people of education and even general knowledge and experience, and all of them therefore wonderfully superior

to Jack Brag, have such strange and ill-arranged notions of our Indian empire,—for so it may be called—that the sharpest and cleverest of them will ask a man who has arrived from the East, if he happen to know Mr. Hawkins, or Mr. Jenkins, or Mr. Tomkins, who went to India about ten years before ; without reference to the Presidency to which he went, or even the service in which he was engaged, which, as they who know the truth, know, is something tantamount to a Bengalee asking an Englishman if he knows Mr. Smith of Great Britain ; the extent of territory in the one, equalizing the numerical superiority in population in the other.

If wise men and clever men, and clever women and wise men, ask such questions of returning Indians, is it to be wondered that Jack Brag, who knew no more about India than Chaucer did, should venture to inquire something about his horror, Brown, and, what really *was* interesting to him, the fate of Brown's wife? Of course the reader must think that Brag would make those researches

after his own fashion ; and so he did — but he *did* make them.

“ I,” said Brag, drawing himself up, and setting his neckcloth to rights—“ I had some connexions in India — but they, like you, have come home — extremely rich and all that — stumpy down, and no mistake ; — left them at Dover — cause indeed of my coming here on my way to meet a friend of mine, at Eastbourn ; — they are off to France — excellent people — I have a very high regard for them.”

“ What part of India do they come from ?” said the stranger, bathing his temples with one hand, and eating a tartlet with the other.

“ What part !” said Jack, “ Oh — I — I — don’t know — India — somewhere about — ”

“ What is the name of your friend ?” said the stranger.

“ His name,” said Jack, “ I should think, must be pretty well known in those parts ; — Brown is his name.”

“ Brown !” said the stranger, “ dear me ! — a gentleman ! — ”

" Why," said Brag, " I don't say much, sir, — but, as I have already said he is a near connexion of mine, I need not, I suppose, answer your question — eh ! — don't you think so ? — I'm plain spoken — straight up, right down, and no mistake. He's a deuced fine fellow, with a deuced handsome fortune, and married to my sister."

" Oh ! " said the stranger, " Ah ! — then I don't know ; — but I *did* know a great horrid creature in India with a carman's shoulders and balustrade legs.—Oh — such a man — of the name of Brown, whose behaviour to a young delicate creature, the daughter of the general, to whom I was aid-de-camp, absolutely drove me out of India — that is — in point of fact —"

" Oh," said Jack, " that cannot be *my* brother-in-law; he is a regular good fellow; prime chap ! what I call a regular switcher, and no mistake."

" Upon my word," said the stranger, " you *do* talk so ! — a switcher ! — I don't in the least understand you. The dreadful man, I mean,

was a serjeant in some regiment, who came out with a wife. Oh, if you had but seen her—such a monster! — all I don't know how — so coarse, and that kind of thing, who voted herself a beauty; and so, somehow for *her* sake, he wanted to be made a gentleman of."

" Yes, sir," said Jack, beginning to grow rather suspicious that his cast had been too good.

" I declare I never saw anything like those people," said the stranger; " so impudent, so pushing, and so rude! However, it did; it answered; and a man—a major—kind of secretary in the general's office, took a fancy to him — Heaven knows why, *I* never could see anything about him to admire — and made him his clerk: from *that*, you would hardly believe it, he became first an officer, then an aid-de-camp, and at last — but then, there is such a long fie-fie story about that — he married the general's daughter!"

" What!" said Jack, affecting perfect indifference, his cheeks red as fire and his hands

cold as ice, " while his other wife was alive?"

" Oh dear no!" said the stranger; " she was dead. She was a very naughty woman, quite paw, paw!"

" Quite what?" said Jack.

" Oh you understand what I mean," said Fripps, (for Narcissus it was, who spoke,) patting his arm, — " quite fie, fie!"

" I don't know what you mean," said Jack, nevertheless shrewdly guessing — hating the half-uttered monosyllabic and mincing manner of his raspberry-eating associate, and feeling, callous as he was, something like a reflective affection for his sister, — " What did she do?"

" Oh," said Fripps, " I can't tell you;— upon my word something so shocking — and — I never did—it was—oh, very bad!"

" And," said Jack, his lips quivering, " what —what became of her?"

" They buried her, poor thing!" said Fripps.

" But—but," said Jack, " tell me, if you please, sir, was she parted from George before *that*?"

"George!" said Fripps; "what—do you know *this* Brown too?"

"No," said Jack; "no, no—I—don't know him—eh! You said his name was George—didn't you? She—I—should like to know about *her*—that's all. You have made me wish to know—that's all."

"What a dear sympathetic mind you have!" said Fripps; "but let me beg you not to trouble yourself about tipsy Kitty!"

"There," said Jack,—"you see—you call *her* Kitty.—Well, you called *him* George.—You did not recollect; and so—she—she—"

"She," said Fripps, "first took to drinking, and then—then—don't you know?—she left this great odious Brown—ran away from him."

"Oh," said Jack; "ah—yes, yes; that's natural."

"And as everybody said," said Fripps, "as they do when a man dies after a long illness, it was a happy release."

"Yes, so it was—that's what *I* often say.—Poor Kitty!" muttered Jack, to himself—but audibly striking his hand upon the table; "Poor soul—poor soul!"

"There it is again," said Fripps; "now you say Kitty."

"*You* said Kitty," said Jack; "how else should I know?"

"There was nothing romantic about her," said Fripps; "she was a dowdy-looking thing, the daughter of a candle-maker somewhere in London; and this Brown persuaded her that he was an officer, and so she ran away with him, and, as she told a friend of mine, who really — upon my word — I declare — people *do* such things in India — used to meet her and talk to her, sometimes in the evening after she had gone away from cantonments, — she had a brother, who helped her to run away with Brown, as she told *him*, because he himself wanted to be very civil indeed to Brown's sister — don't you see?"

"Yes," said Jack; not lifting his eyes from the table — "Umph! — I do — I see it all."

"It is so strange," said Fripps, "that you should have asked me about anybody of such a common name as Brown in all India, and that

I should have been able to give you such a comical history. However, as I told you, *this* Brown afterwards married the general's daughter, and when *that* happened, I gave up my staff appointment,—I could not stop in the place,—and so Brown succeeded me, and then the general died, and left him the whole of his large fortune."

"He did, did he?" said Jack; "why then—" swallowing at one gulp the remainder of his grog—"that—eh!—that was—straight up, right down, and no mistake!"—and the laugh that followed the words was hollow and sepulchral.

"What office did your relation fill in India?" said Fripps.

"I forget, at the moment," said Jack.

"Was he civil or military?" said Fripps.

"Very civil, I believe," said Jack; "but—I don't know."

"No, but," said Fripps, "I mean, was he a civilian or a soldier?"

"I forget," said Jack, who was quite "toppled over" himself for once, "but we'll—that

is, if you have no objection — talk this over in the morning. I'm what you call, right slick stumped ; I have been riding hard all the forenoon, and am regularly done. Perhaps we shall meet at breakfast, sir."

" I shall be so happy you can't think !" said Fripps. " I shall try and get up towards town to-morrow in the course of the day, perhaps as far as Tunbridge Wells. But that will make no difference; and I shall be quite delighted to renew our acquaintance in London when we meet there."

" You are uncommon good," said Jack ; " I shall be very glad indeed"—at the same time ringing the bell for a light. In a minute or two more he quitted the room, with a bow to Fripps, who seemed greatly disappointed at the growing want of cordiality which he thought he had discovered in Jack's manner, as their dialogue had advanced.

So, however, they parted for the night.

In a few minutes afterwards, Fripps rang to give Rummagee-Doss notice of his approach to rest ; and while he was half leaning, half

lolling on the table, on the edge of his departure for his room, he incidentally asked the waiter if he knew the name of the gentleman who had just retired.

"The gentleman's name is Brag, sir," said the man.

"Brag!" said Fripps; "you don't mean that!—well! if ever—"

"That is the gentleman's name, sir," replied the man.

"Well then, if ever I did"—said Fripps.
"What time is he going in the morning?"

"He has ordered horses at nine, sir," said the man. "The chaise is to follow him to St. Leonard's, as he means to walk on."

"Well, never mind," said Fripps: "only take care and don't let anybody call me till ten. I have no doubt—the name is so uncommon—but that I have told the unhappy man the whole story of his wretched fie-fie sister. *Her* name was Brag—that's all I know. I declare I wouldn't have done such a thing for a thousand rupees. Hitherow, come along:—where is the creature? Here—help me up.

Good night ! Well, I declare — come, Rummagee — it can't be helped ! — good night — good night ! Well — if ever — ”

And so tottered up to his chamber the delicate Narcissus Fripps, who had thus innocently afforded Jack all the information about his sister which he perhaps could never have derived from any other source. This advantage Jack had gained by boasting of his high Indian connexions ; while the misery of Fripps, consequent upon the discovery that his companion was Mrs. Brown's brother, was occasioned by Brag's having ostentatiously announced his name, while asking after his servant and carriage.

It is needless to add, as the jest-books say, that Jack, who certainly did not much admire the manners of his communicative companion, and still less the nature of his communication, was up in the morning by seven, and, before eight, was off towards St. Leonard's. As he walked onwards, his mind was as much occupied as it could be with anything, with the account he had heard of his sister. From what Mead had previously told him, the intelligence of the preceding evening

certainly did not so much surprise him as it otherwise would have done ; but every man has *some* feeling, more or less as the case may be ; and Jack had been, at the moment, affected by the unexpected recital of this piece of family history.

From the meditation in which he was absorbed, Jack was aroused upon his arrival at that splendid creation of modern art and industry, St. Leonard's, which perhaps affords one of the most beautiful and wonderful proofs of individual taste, judgment, and perseverance, that our nation exhibits. Under the superintendence of Mr. Burton, a desert has become a thickly-peopled town : buildings of an extensive nature and most elegant character rear their heads where, but a few years since, the barren cliffs presented their chalky fronts to the storm and wave ; and rippling streams and hanging groves adorn the valley which, twenty years since, was a sterile and shrubless ravine.

Jack, who appreciated in a very slight degree the beauties of nature, and who talked of a

fine country only in reference to hedges, ditches, stone walls, and five-barred gates, looked at the sea, only as a great glittering body of water which dazzled his eyes — and at cliffs as something uncommonly out of the way. His approbation of St. Leonard's was excited not by the great changes its establishment has made in the face of the neighbourhood, nor by its intrinsic beauty ; (and he expressed his satisfaction to a promiscuous friend with whom he had fallen into conversation in the street;) but because it reminded him of the Regent's Park ; and he judiciously added, that if it could only be got away from the sea, and set down altogether in a sporting part of Leicestershire, with a lot more stables, it would be a regular “ trump,” and no mistake.

His temporary companion heard his opinion, looked at him, touched his hat, and walked on.

It may be asked, if Jack had such an aversion for the sea, why he should propose to visit Eastbourne—or why he had hovered upon the coast? The truth is, Jack was like the king of the chess-board towards the end of the

game. The widow and her sister occupied the London square, and if he moved thither, he would certainly put himself into danger ; from Dover he had been driven by Lord Tom's check — or rather checque ; France was occupied by his adversary's queen ; and the inland watering-places were filled by knights and rooks, who were so placed as to keep him at bay if he ventured near their quadrates. Eastbourne, he had heard, was quiet and retired ; and the fewer people there were resident in it, the less chance he had of being known ; and obscurity to him, just at this particular moment, was, strange to say, desirable. His various defeats must inevitably become known, a circumstance which would speedily bring the game to an end ; and his last check would, in all probability, arrive without the accompanying cry of "mate" from any of the ladies whom he had so assiduously besieged, so to Eastbourne he proceeded as soon as the appointed chaise from "The Swan" overtook him.

To those, to whom Nature has given a taste,

the drive from Hastings to Eastbourne is one full of interest ; but Jack, who looked at Pevensey Castle with a shudder on account of the owls and the ivy that were about it, and considered the neighbouring martello towers as works of coeval antiquity with its Roman brick walls, regarded with an “equal eye” every other object, animate or inanimate, which he happened to encounter or pass on his way to the place of his destination ; and most certainly, of all things that never entered his head, one never was near it,—which is the fact, that we are indebted for the term “merry-Andrew” to a native of the, at present, dullest little cluster of houses in England — this very identical Pevensey itself. It was there, that Andrew Borde, or, according to his own absurd latinization of his name, Andreas Perforatus, first saw the light. He was educated first at Winchester, and then at New College, where he studied physic, and travelled over almost every part of the then known world. He returned to England in 1542, took his doctor’s degree, and settled at his native place, whence,

finding the climate remarkable healthy, and the people all exceedingly well, he proceeded to London, and became first physician to Henry VIII.

He was, however, a wag ; and used to visit fairs and markets, and make speeches to the people, and crack jokes, by way of advocating the cause of medicine, and especially the use of those particular remedies, which his eloquence went most highly to eulogize : — hence his *sobriquet*, wherever he was known, was “ Merry Andrew,” — a nickname which, in the first instance, descended to his successors in practice, but who, in course of time and the progress of refinement, ostensibly separated the functions of fool and physician ; and while the medical part devolved upon the doctor, the mummery was confined to the merry-Andrew.

Of this Borde — as I have mentioned him — I must add, that merry as he was, and author as he was, of jest-books, and satires, and “ books of knowledge,” his eccentricity took another turn later in life, and he practised all the austerities of the Carthusians,—a course of dis-

cipline which might perhaps have well prepared him to endure imprisonment in the Fleet prison, where he died in 1549. Some say he poisoned himself; and others tell us that he was not incarcerated for debt:—Wood, however, calls him “a noted poet, a witty and ingenious person, and an excellent physician.”

This little digression, for which I duly apologize, just brings our hero to the door of the “Hotel” at Eastbourne, which, magnificently as the word sounds, does not, in point of fact, possess the striking attributes of its more lordly contemporaries. Jack rather liked its unostentatious appearance, and entered it with one of his liveliest expressions of countenance, skipping as usual, rather than stepping out of his chaise into the hall.

“Have rooms?” said Jack; “sitting and bed-room, eh?—all snug and comfortable, and no mistake? Seen my servant down here, with the phaeton, and my things.”

“No, sir,” said the landlady, “I think not. What name, sir?”

“Brag,” said Jack; “a young man—light

weight—dark mixture frock, leathers and tops, an olive-green phaeton, and pair of bright bays."

"No, sir," said the hostess; "no such person has been here; perhaps he has gone to 'The Lamb,' or the 'New Inn,' at South."

"Stupid dog!" said Brag; "perhaps he has. I told him 'The Hotel,' as plain as I could speak."

"Shall we send and see, sir?" said the wily landlady.

"I wish you would," said Brag. "Where do you think he is gone?"

"To 'The Lamb,' perhaps, sir," said the mistress of the hotel.

"Couldn't mistake Lamb for Hotel!" replied our hero, looking as much in earnest as if he really had expected the servant and equipage which he so accurately described. "Never mind, I can do without him till tomorrow, so don't fuss yourself on my account. Just show me my room, and I'll order my dinner, and all that, and take a turn while it is getting ready."

Those who are not acquainted with Eastbourne, and more especially, the 'Sea Houses,' which give their name to the *quartier* in which Jack had established himself, can scarcely believe how very agreeable a place it is. It is true there is nothing like gaiety going on ; there are no crowded promenades ; there are no grand balls—no house in the whole groupe is spacious enough to enable a man to inflict a large party on his friends ; but everything around one is, though humble, clean, fresh, and delightful. The two extreme points of the place at which civilization ends are distinguished by buildings which in other days would have afforded but little gratification to cockney ears. "The Round House" is the *ultima Thule* of the promenade in one direction, and the "Watch-house" the termination of it at the other. These are, however, but local and conventional terms, and in the height of the season you will generally find some delightful family located in the one, and at all seasons a gallant sea-officer stationed at the other.

To enjoy the quiet of this peaceful village,

for such it is, after all the worries of the few preceding days, and "sniff the briny," which, although he did not admire its beauties, he admitted was "uncommon refreshing," was Jack's first wish:—it might perhaps give him an appetite; and then his wine would serve as a Lethean draft after it; and then in the morning he should get up calm, and cool, and comfortable, and seek his fortune at the Library, which to cockneys is always a resource, and to Jack could not fail to be a very important one. Accordingly, he hastened his "twilight," and having calculated the length of time required for dressing his fish and fowl, descended the stairs, looking all fresh and smart, or, to use his own favourite phrase, "as nice as nip!"

"How long," said Jack, pulling up his collars,—"how long will it be before my dinner is ready?"

"About half an hour," said the landlady.

"What do you call your best wine here?" asked Jack.

"All very good, sir, I believe," was the reply.

"What claret have you?" said Jack.

"Very good Lafitte, sir — Chateau Margaut," said mine hostess.

"Oh—ah!" said Jack,—"any good Madeira — eh! — London Particular, and no mistake!"

"Our Madeira, sir," said the landlady, "I am afraid is not quite so good."

"Port and sherry, I suppose?" said Jack — "Kitchen wines, eh?"

"Both excellent in their way, sir," said the landlady. "We get our port from Paxton, and our sherry from Toone."

"Very good names," said Jack. "And champagne or hock?"

"Both, sir," replied the landlady.

"Any ice in the house?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, very well," said Jack; "I'll — see about it. My man is not come, I suppose?"

"No, sir."

"Nor the carriage?"

"No, sir."

"In half an hour, you say, dinner will be ready?" said Jack.

"Yes, sir," said the hostess.

"I like dining early by way of a change," said Jack ; "something new after the infernal late hours of London. I'll be in time, rely upon it, and no mistake."

Saying which, he walked into his sitting-room, adjusted his hat on one side of his head, pulled up his collars, and just giving himself a sort of satisfactory shake before the looking-glass, sallied forth, scarcely deigning to look at a man, of about his own size, dressed in black, whose innocent mind he had been endeavouring to astonish, by the dialogue which he had just concluded with the landlady on the subject of the wines, and the ice, and the servant, and the carriage.

The man of about his own size, in black, however, was not to be so passed over. He came forward as Jack advanced, and rather startled our hero by a peculiar interest which seemed to pervade his countenance, as Jack moved across the hall towards the door with an air and manner something between a swagger and a wriggle, smacking, as usual, his

boots with his “remarkably small whip,” and thinking he was doing it all right, and no mistake!

Jack cast a sort of contemptuous glance over the figure of his fellow guest, with which he could scarcely avoid *favouring* him, since he seemed to force a notice of some sort from him. Who he could be, Jack could not exactly comprehend; — In black — with a remarkably bad hat; — too smart for an undertaker — not smart enough for a parson — Village doctor perhaps, looking out for patients. No matter. Heads or Tails, what did it signify to him? And away went Jack, baffling the breeze, which blew right in his face, and came strong upon him as he “opened” the sea between Weston’s shop and the library.

There were but few promenaders, and in the library not more than three persons; one of whom was peeping through the little hole of a kaleidoscope, another poring over the list of subscribers, and the third, standing just inside the half-opened door beating the old gentleman’s tattoo with his fingers upon the window-

pane. Jack looked in, enjoyed for a moment the well-known smell of green baize, white-brown paper, kid gloves, Windsor soap, varnish, and lavender-water, with which such gay receptacles are generally redolent ; then turned out again, and walked as far as he could in the direction of Beachy Head, the state of the tide and the nature of the shore limiting his excursion thitherwards, however, to about two hundred yards.

Having done this, he followed the example of the other strollers, and walked back again, extending his march beyond Mrs. Gilbert's "Tea Room," and the life-boat, and concluding it by entering the garden of the hotel, which opens to the beach, by which route he regained his parlour, satisfied that the air was remarkably bracing, and the company of the place as select as he could possibly wish it to be.

The cloth was laid ; everything prepared ; and nothing appeared to be wanting but the summons — the rub of the lamp to produce the Genius. Jack rang the bell ; — all was ready.

The smoking fish came, leaping like a salmon to the board, and in five minutes Jack was seated fork in hand.

"What wine do you take, sir?" said the waiter, who had heard the conversation upon that particular subject which had passed between the guest and his mistress in the hall.

"Wine?" said Jack, "why, half a pint of sherry; and bring some small beer, if it's very good."

"Yes, sir," said the waiter, and, it is needless to add, did as he was bid.

Jack certainly had been upset by the last night's rencontre; but still, as his stomach filled, and the genial influence of the cruet-full of Toone's super-excellent began to operate, he again reared his drooping head; and resolving to care nothing for what could not be helped, ordered a bottle of old port, and a bit of fire; for although the season was young, yet the weather was coldish, and he felt chilly, and besides, as one of the most beautiful women that ever fell into

solitude in the midst of a crowd once said to me — “ To anybody who lives so much alone as I do, a cheerful fire is company.” These simple words sounded to *me* deeply pathetic, and conveyed to my mind an idea of the wretchedness of involuntary seclusion, which more eloquent language, or a finer-turned phrase would perhaps not have produced. That fair creature, however, once the gem-like centre of the circle she brightened and adorned, is gone to her long account ; and if retribution were to be meted out to mortals in *this* world, she would nearly have atoned for all her faults before she left it.

“ Put down some dessert,” said Jack, “ clap a log on the grate, draw the curtains, and bring me the London paper.”

“ Yes, sir,” said the waiter, who implicitly obeyed the commands he received, but still looked somehow suspiciously at Jack, not as doubting his respectability and solvency, or even questioning the bright vision of the groom and the phaeton, but as if expecting that some-

thing was likely to happen in the course of the evening to mar the comfort of the ‘cheerful fire-side.’ ”

The paper came ; Jack occupied two chairs, and it would be doing the vain simpleton injustice to deny that as he sipped his wine his thoughts reverted to his sister Kate. The chain, it is true, contained many links, and one end of it was riveted to the counter of the candle-shop ; but still there is no man so callous, or so heartless, but that at certain moments he “ feels :” — Jack *did* feel, and even went the length of repenting many things which he had done, and regretting that he had not done many others which he had neglected, and was really getting quite amiable. There certainly *was* a reason for this — he was alone,—and had no game to play.

From the reverie or rather slumber into which the heat of the fire, the strength of the port wine, and the very long leading articles of the newspaper which he was reading without understanding one syllable contained in them, had

thrown him, he was aroused in about three quarters of an hour by the re-appearance of the waiter, who said that a gentleman wished to speak a few words to him.

"To me?" said Jack.

"Mr. Brag, I believe, sir," said the waiter.

"Yes," said Brag, "in course, that's my name, and no mistake. What is the gentleman's name?"

"I don't know, sir," said the waiter. "He is outside, sir."

"Desire him to come in," said Jack, who concluded it was either the master of the ceremonies to nail him for a subscription, or the apothecary to secure a patient, or perhaps some of the parochial authorities desirous of knowing whether he would wish the bells at "South," as they call it, to announce his arrival at the Sea Houses.

The waiter opened the door, and all Jack's suspicions were confirmed when he beheld the man about his own size, dressed in the shabby-genteel black, whom he had entirely astonished

about the wines, the ice, the servants, the horses and the carriage, in the hall before dinner, enter the room with a low bow.

The waiter retired, and shut the door.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the shabby-genteel, holding his shocking bad hat in his hand, "I believe, sir, your name is Brag?"

"It is, sir," said Jack.

"Of Lower Grosvenor Street, in the Parish of St. George, Hanover Square, Middlesex," said the stranger.

"Exactly so," said Brag.

"It is very curious, sir," said the stranger, "that I should have been lucky enough to meet with you here. I have been frequently to Grosvenor Street, but the people there, said you never lived there. I heard, sir, you had a house in Surrey, but I never could find out exactly where it was. We did get a letter saying that the newspaper said you were gone to Dover, and I should have gone over to that place from this, but your arrival here saves me a great deal of trouble, and will make no difference to you, sir."

"No," said Jack, drawing his little legs off the second chair, and sitting upright to look at his visitor,—“but may I just ask why you happen to be so very anxious to see *me*?”

“I am clerk, sir,” said the visitor, “to Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton, of Pump Court, Temple, and have been for these ten days looking out to serve you with notice of action of trespass at the suit of Thomas Grindleston of Wigglesford, in the county of Herts. We wrote twice to you, sir, but, not getting any answer, and not knowing the name of your solicitor, *my* gentlemen ordered me to look after you at Dover; but as I had some business here, on my way, the minute I heard you asking for your carriage and servant, and mentioning your name, I said to myself—‘That’s my gentleman.—Here is the copy of the writ, sir, which I now serve you with.’”

“Upon my life,” said Jack, “I don’t know what I have to do with this.”

“It’s about the steeple chase, sir,” said the visitor, “of which you had the management,

and which did considerable damage to Mr. Grindleston's property."

"But," said Jack, "there are hundreds of steeple chases in the course of the year, and nobody is prosecuted."

"That is all according to taste, sir," said the stranger. "Mr. Grindleston, our client, sir, is not a sporting character, and doesn't exactly see why *you*, as having marked out the line, should have chosen to draw it directly across his property; — even hunting a fox, sir, over another man's grounds, after the case decided by Lord Ellenborough, (Earl of Essex against General Capel, 1809,) is held to be a trespass. In the case of Merest and Harvey, the defendant committed the trespass in the plaintiff's presence after being warned off — the jury there, sir, gave five hundred pounds damages; and Sir Vicary Gibbs, who tried the case, refused a new trial, and said, 'Suppose I had a walk before my house which I had a pleasure in looking at or walking on, would it be allowed that a man should come and walk there to my annoyance, and

then offer me a halfpenny in satisfaction, alleging that I had received no actual damage?" "

" But what am I to do now, sir ?" said Jack.

" Nothing in the world, sir," said the stranger ; " just put that slip of paper into your pocket, and the gentleman, whoever he may be, who is concerned for you, will tell you all the rest."

" Sir," said Jack, " I don't understand this at all ; I have no gentleman who is concerned for me — nor lady either, as I begin to think ; and I don't comprehend it — it's all gibberish — moonshine — nonsense — straight up, right down, and no mistake."

" No, sir, I will not trouble you any farther," said the clerk ; " I know there's no mistake—but I have done my duty, sir, and I wish you good evening. I would not have intruded till the morning," added the shabby genteel ; " but I have a chance of a cast to Lewes to-night, and I thought it best to lose no time."

" And who are your employers ?" said Jack,

who had just instinct sufficient to know that he had got himself into a scrape.

"Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton, of Pump Court, Temple, sir," replied the clerk : "good evening, sir." Saying which, the unwelcome visitor disappeared, and closed the door after him.

This was extremely agreeable ; here was Brag saddled with an action for trespass, singled out as the leader of the sport, and all the burthens upon his mind crowned with a lawsuit, and all resulting from his own empty vanity, in putting himself forward as the hero of the day ; a piece of absurdity rendered more objectionable to the plaintiff Grindleston, because he thought proper to puff himself into possession of the said plaintiff's property. However, it was of no use thinking it over, then — morning was the time for business ; and so Jack, relieved from the presence of the harpy, proceeded to read the paper and drink his port, till he fell again into a profound slumber from which he awoke only to ring the bell, order his candle, and go to bed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE morning again dawned, and again was Brag "up and stirring." He read and re-read the narrow strip of paper which had been fastened upon him by the emissary from Messrs. Tapps, Tatlock, and Shackleton, of Pump Court, and was very little the wiser for the information he derived from its contents. Instinct, however, made him very much dislike the affair, upon which, he concluded, he must consult some lawyer of his own; but not having such an officer regularly retained in his household, and knowing but little of the routine of legal business, he proceeded, in the first instance, to act upon the directions of the imp from whom he had received the "strip," and put it into his pocket.

During breakfast he seriously repeated the usual fruitless inquiries after his servant and equipage, and received the anticipated negative to his questions with an affectation of high displeasure, strengthened by one of those brief but emphatic exclamations, which, if uttered before one of his Majesty's worshipful justices of the peace, would have subjected him to a fine of five shillings.

Having despatched his morning meal, he repaired to the stables, and ran his eye over the horses which were standing in them,—at times looked knowingly at some of the best,—and spoke technically to the coachmen or grooms about some of the worst. One pair of coach-horses particularly struck his fancy :—To whom did they belong?—was his question to a servant, wearing bright orange plush unmentionables, who was, without coat, waiscoat, or jacket, working away at one of them, polishing him up to a degree of brightness and smoothness very difficult of attainment in horse-skins at the sea-side.

“ Whose horses did you say these were ?” said Jack.

"Mrs. Peckover's, sir," said the man.

"What!" said Jack — "the lady of my friend Mr. Heneage Peckover of Womanswould in Kent?"

"The same, sir," said the servant.

"Is Mr. Peckover dead?" said Jack.

"Not particularly, sir," said the man, continually rubbing and hissing as hard as he well could; "on the contrary, he is as lively as ever."

"Because you said Mrs. Peckover's horses," said Jack.

"Yes," said the man, "we calls everything missus's. What's master's is her's—and what's her's is her own, sir. Master don't much interfere."

"Where are they staying?" said Jack.

"At that house, sir," said the man, stepping out of the stable-door and pointing, "with the bow-window there, sir."

"Oh," said Jack, "I must go and call on them.—Very fine pair of nags as ever I clapped my eyes upon—good colour, shape, and make: fast trotters, I take it."

"Uncommon, sir," said the man, "and step together like winkin'."

"All right that," said Jack, "and no mistake:"—and out he walked, not sorry, however much he might wish for retirement, at finding an acquaintance in the place, who was not very well known either to, or by the persons with whom he, for the present, desired to have no particular connexion.

Jack had met Mr. Peckover out with hounds round London. He was a hale, portly man, of some fifty-six, with rosy cheeks and strong limbs; the voice of a Stentor; and a laugh which, when excited, might be heard "a goodly league at sea."

It is said that men's characters sometimes agree with their names, although James Smith has given us an excellent song to exhibit "the rule of contraries" in this particular. Certain it is, however, that Heneage Peckover, of Womanswould in the county of Kent, Esq. was — tall as he was, broad as he was, heavy as he was, and loud as he was — the mere slave of his wife, from whom, it may be

necessary to observe, he had derived nearly the whole of the fortune which enabled him to make the figure he made in society. What he originally *had* been, history has not accurately recorded ; but the aristocratic character of the former of his two names (christian-name it can scarcely be called) led people to suppose that his connexions must somehow have been of a superior order.

Jack had never seen the lady,— nor indeed had any of the “friends” with whom Mr. Peckover was in the habit of hunting.— Not to hear of her, after having been five minutes in her husband’s society, would have been impossible. It was not enough that she directed his conduct and controlled his actions ; nor that he paid her every deference whilst in her society, and followed her instructions with the implicit obedience of a well-broken spaniel, whenever she thought fit to fulminate them. The habit of submission was so strongly impressed upon his mind, that it had induced something like a veneration for her opinions and decisions, by which his whole conduct in life was regulated ;

so that although, when away from her, he really was what may be called a capital jolly country gentleman ; and laughed, and joked, in *his* way, with the greatest earnestness and fervour, still he had neither taste nor judgment of his own ; and his conversation was therefore made up of continued references to “ Mrs. Peckover,” and her views, her opinions, her *dicta*, and her decisions upon all subjects, which were rendered the more strikingly absurd to his ordinary companions, inasmuch as they had never seen the lady, nor ever were likely to see her, since she peremptorily declined receiving her husband’s sporting acquaintance, the exclusion of whom from *her* house, (as she invariably called it,) was the condition alone upon which she permitted him to enjoy what are called the pleasures of the chase.

The extent of the present scene of action was so small, that all the inhabitants of the comfortable Kraal were visible to each other in the course of any one hour of any one day ; and not much more than half that period of time had elapsed, when Jack espied his friend

walking with Colonel Stiffkey, whom he also knew, from having met him occasionally at Mrs. Dallington's. This was rather a drawback to the gratification he experienced in seeing Mr. Peckover, who looked glowingly bright; his rubicund face shining well over a buttoned-up blue coat, "leathers" of the old school, and "tops" to match.

"Bless my soul! — Mr. Brag," exclaimed Peckover; "who the deuce would have thought of finding you here?"

"I might say the same to you, sir," said Jack. "How d'ye do, sir? Needn't ask — charming well, I am sure."—"How d'ye do, Colonel?" added Brag, waiting to see what sort of recognition the colonel would afford him.

The Colonel's "Quite well!" was as gracious as possible.

"As for *me*," said Peckover, "Mrs. Peckover says she never saw me looking better. True enough; — I'm hearty and hale, and all *that*—ha, ha, ha! Are you come to stay here, Mr. Brag?"

" For some time, I think," said Brag. " I have just got away from the Ilfracombes, and the Dawlishes, and Lord Tom, who have been at Dover. Lord Tom wanted me to go to Paris to ride his horses, but I know a trick worth two of that — sure of a wrangle wherever he is concerned ; so I backed out, smack, smooth, and no mistake."

" Mrs. Peckover says," said Peckover, " that horse-racing is but ticklish work, after all : — too much in the hands of other people — jockeys, trainers, and friends — eh ? — ha, ha, ha ! "

" I never have been on the turf," said Stiffkey, with an air of self-satisfaction which would have induced anybody who did not know him, to believe that his abstinence had not proceeded from the positive want of money and horses.

" Mr. Brag," said Peckover, " is a capital jockey, if you come to that. Well — where do you dine to-day ?"

This question was asked, first, in the hope that Brag was engaged ; and secondly, because

Peckover flattered himself that he could prevail upon his lady to admit him and the colonel to her table, by explaining to her that the colonel was *not* one of his hunting friends, and concealing from her the fact that Brag *was*.

"I am not engaged anywhere," said Brag—
"I'm at the hotel."

"So am I," said the Colonel.

"I'm sure Mrs. Peckover will be delighted to see you," said Heneage. "She dines at six—'because,' as, she says, 'early hours, good air, and plain feeding, are good for one's health'—and I believe it to be so—ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall be most happy," said the Colonel.

"And I," said Jack.

"That's a large ship in the offing," said the Colonel.

"Mrs. Peckover tells me she thinks it's a man-of-war," said Peckover. "I don't know much about ships, but I dare say it is. She has been watching it through her glass."

"For a sea place," said Jack, "this is uncommon snug—and I like the look of the country round it."

“ Why,” said Peckover, “ Mrs. Peckover’s opinion is, that the mixture of trees, and sea, and corn-fields, and downs, and good roads, and fine cliffs, is extremely beautiful. For my own part, I don’t profess to know much about such things; but I take it all as it comes. Ha, ha, ha !”

“ That’s the only way to get on in this world,” said the Colonel. “ Pray have you been over to Hurstmonceaux ?” added the gallant officer.

“ No,” said Peckover; “ Mrs. Peckover went there last Tuesday, I think it was. She has great taste for ruins, and remnants, and relics, and all that. She took over two or three young ladies, the Miss Gubbinses, who are here, and there was no room for me in the carriage, so I staid here, and played billiards with the marker’s boy till she came back.”

“ There seems to be no news in the London papers this morning ?” said the Colonel.

“ No,” said his friend; “ Mrs. Peckover tells me, that if Russia, Austria, and Prussia were to join against France, the odds would be greatly

in favour of the coalition ; but I don't trouble my head much about politics. Ha, ha, ha !"

" Well," said Brag, " is there anything to see near at hand ? Where is what they call 'South,' because I suspect my fool of a servant has lost himself and my phaeton, somewhere in the Wilds of Sussex, and I may, perhaps find him stalled up at 'The Lamb,' I think the hotel people call it."

" Oh, ah !" said Peckover ; " South — they call it South, Mrs. Peckover tells me, to distinguish it from East, which they call this. Mrs. Peckover gets all our meat from a butcher at South. I 'll walk with you."

" With all my heart," said the Colonel.

" That 's right !" said Jack ; " I think a toddle along the road will do us good, and no mistake !"

" Mrs. Peckover says walking exercise is the best," said her husband, " yet, somehow, she generally drives about herself ; however, I don't pretend to understand these matters. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Come, let 's start."

And away the trio went, Jack extremely well

pleased with his reception, and resolved to keep quiet and easy, more than ever struck with his fat friend's perpetual reference to his better half, and convinced, by Colonel Stiffkey's manner towards him, that he had not been enlightened in any degree upon the subject of the affair with Mrs. Dallington and Miss Englefield.

The day was delightful, and they had got on the road just as far as where foot passengers generally strike into the fields, when Brag perceived a man, who, by the azure hue of his coat, and the bright orange-colour of his pluses, he knew to be one of Peckover's footmen, coming at what he considered a splitting pace in pursuit of them.

"One of your servants, I think," said Jack.

"Oh," said Peckover, "most probably Mrs. Peckover wishes to be of our party.—Well, Stephen, what is it?"

"My missus, sir," said Stephen, "wants you to come in, if you please."

"Oh, come in, does she?" said the Hercu-

lean infant ;—“ Why doesn’t she come out ?—it would do her a vast deal more good. What, is she in the house ?”

“ Yes, sir,” said Stephen, “ and bid me say she was waiting.”

“ Why, then, gentlemen,” said Peckover, I am afraid I must leave you. I know she has some project for this morning, but I don’t pretend to know anything of her movements.—I’m coming, Stephen. — I’ll just step home, and if I can get away I’ll follow you — only don’t mind *me*. Back at six ;—don’t forget—punctual to the minute, for as Mrs. Peckover says, you can never expect to have a good dinner or a good cook, if you are not punctual —so mind. Ha, ha, ha !”

“ Never fear,” said Jack ; “ I’ll be at the post, afore the bell rings for saddling, and no mistake.

“ And I will be the very shadow of Mr. Brag,” said the Colonel.

“ That’s one of the comforts of matrimony,” said the Colonel, after watching Peckover’s

hurried return homewards. "That gentle giant is tied to his lady's apron string, and beyond its tether, wander he must not."

"I think," said Jack, "if I was as big as he, I should try if I couldn't break it."

"Did you ever see Mrs. Peckover?" said the Colonel.

"Never set eyes on her," replied Jack.

"She is a delicate looking woman," said the Colonel; "her figure small and slight; her nose long, her mouth wide, her voice shrill, and her tongue exhibiting to the curious in 'natural mechanism' the long-sought-for desideratum of perpetual motion. The only relief she gives that active member, or her husband, is when she is sulky, upon which occasions she keeps him sitting in her boudoir, or wherever it may be, the whole day, without letting him stir out, or speaking a syllable to him while he stays at home."

"But why does not he kick?" said Jack;—
"rebel; run rusty?"

"Because he believes her to be the cleverest

woman in all the world," said the Colonel. "As for disputing the excellence of her taste, or doubting the infallibility of her opinions, he would as soon think of flying; and such has been the nature of her management in breaking him in, that he does not in the slightest degree consider her tyranny as oppressive; on the contrary, he thinks her so far above every other living creature, that his homage and submission are voluntary tributes to her perfection."

"I suppose," said Jack, "we must not venture to contradict anything she says at dinner, even in the way of joke?"

"You need not be apprehensive of her doing anything in that line," said the Colonel. "I once, and only once, dined with them at their place Womanswould, and she took offence in the early part of dinner because Peckover drank wine with somebody without asking *her* which wine he ought to drink; and from that moment she stopped her loquacity dead short, and moped for the rest of the evening."

"Wouldn't it be a good thing to affront her

a little at starting?" said Jack; "perhaps it might give him a chance of throwing in a word."

"Not a bit," said the Colonel: "if *she* won't speak, *he* mustn't; so we should have to keep up the ball between us, unless one or two of those Miss Gubbinses, who are a good deal with her, should happen to be of the party. However, we must trust to Fate.—You say you are just from Dover?"

"Came off the day before yesterday," said Jack.

"Did you happen to see some old friends of mine there?" said the Colonel — "the Gunnersburys?"

"Oh, yes," said Jack; "I dined there the day before I left. Very pleasant party. The Dullinghams, and Sir Henry Rockley, and a Mr. and Mrs. Carnaby. What a queer body Lady Gunnersbury is!"

"Monstrous spirits," said the Colonel.

"Talk of perpetual motion," said Jack; "I think she'd give Mrs. Peckover two stone and a distance, and beat her in a canter."

“ Yes, she is an entertaining old lady,” said the Colonel.

“ To be sure, how she did go on !” said Jack.

“ It is through *her*,” said Stiffkey, “ that I am connected with the family. She is my great-aunt ; and I mean to pay them a visit before I go to London. Indeed, George Gunnersbury has more than half promised to come over to me here, and in that case we should return together. He is a capital fellow !”

“ Oh, very pleasant indeed !” said Jack.

“ He has more real fun about him when he is in a good humour, than anybody I know,” said Stiffkey.

“ Yes, thought Jack, may be so—at the same moment congratulating himself that the Colonel’s developement of his connexion with the family, saved him from something very like a repetition of the Dullingham affair, out of which he had so recently escaped.

“ By the way,” said the Colonel, wishing, as it should seem, to vary the topics of conversation to suit Jack’s particular taste, “ when did

you see our fair friends, the widow and her sister?"

"The day before I left town," said Jack ; "I—in fact—I thought it better to—with draw. I like candour — hate what I call sham-abraham. Give me sincerity—all straight up, right down, and no mistake. And I thought in my own mind that they were playing what I call a shuffling game. It looked somehow like a regular cross."

"I don't exactly see," said the Colonel.

"Why, what I say, Colonel, is this," said Jack ;—"if you mean a thing, say so ; and if you don't mean it, don't go on worritting and fretting people about nothing. I saw that Lydiard and Rushton,—two deuced good fellows in their way—were making themselves miserable about these two females, so I says to Lydiard, says I, 'Put a face upon this; don't be trifled with :'—and I said the same to Rushton :—and, in course,—as I know the sex, and shouldn't speak without knowing regularly what I was about,—they took my advice : and I'm sure — as you know all the

parties, and,—in course, we are tiled—I brought the whole thing about, smack, smooth, and no mistake whatever:—opened their eyes to their own situation; and the night before I left town,—which I did in uncommon high glee at having made up the matter,—I set them down to supper, two regular couple, all wrangles over—and *they*; matched for life as nice as nip, and no mistake.”

It was Jack’s misfortune, whenever he became eloquent, to fall immediately into his own peculiar style of oratory; and this burst, to which he had been encouraged by the colonel’s evident ignorance of all the real facts, brought the gallant officer’s eyes into an almost full stare of astonishment at the mode in which his voluble, volatile friend expressed himself.

“ I have thought sometimes,” said the Colonel, “ when I have had the pleasure of meeting you there, that you were in the field yourself. It struck me that you thought Miss Englefield’s singing very charming.”

“ So I did,” said Jack, still clinging to the *eclat* of having been favoured by anything so

charming as Blanche, and yet wishing to convey the idea that he had been smiled on by both — “ so I did ; but then I was taken uncommonly by Mrs. Dallington’s talking. They are both delightful creechurs ! No : I admired them both as a friend — a sincere friend — nothing more ; and so I thought the best thing I could do was, to pair them off with the men whom they liked, and who liked them.”

“ Most marvellous self-denial !” said the Colonel.

By this time they had reached “ South,” and the colonel accompanied Brag to “ The New Inn,” and thence to “ The Lamb,” in order that he might go through the ceremony of enquiring for his “ fool of a servant, and his phaeton,” which, to do his acting credit, he performed with the greatest apparent earnestness.

These matters adjusted, they returned by a circuitous route, and as they were wending their way through the open gardens at the back of “ The Sea Houses,” they beheld the glittering equipage of Mrs. Peckover trailing

along the road, containing herself and her two favourite friends, the Gubbines, and proceeding towards Westham and Pevensey."

"Our friend, taking the air," said the Colonel.

"Mr. P. isn't there?" said Jack.

"No, she very seldom takes him out with her," said the Colonel. "She says he is too big for the inside of the carriage, and she cannot dispense with her footman, who, upon these occasions, shares the box with the coachman. I dare say we shall find him somewhere about; or perhaps she has sent him to pick up laver for her, which is found here in plenty and perfection."

"Well," said Jack, "if I were Mr. Peckover, sooner than stand *that*, I would dig stones in a quarry on my own account."

"There is no accounting for taste," said the Colonel; "besides, there are secrets in all families, and we do not perhaps know what the reciprocal obligations of the parties to each other may be; one thing is certain, he wears his chains merrily. I never saw a man more

perfectly happy: however, let us proceed to the library, where, if his lady-wife have not ordered him on some fatigue-party, we shall in all probability find him knocking the balls about as usual, either by himself or with the marker's boy."

Anything makes a pursuit at a watering-place. A glassblower, whose performances have been before your eyes for years in London, without exciting your attention in the slightest degree, at a watering-place becomes an object of wonder and surprise;—a sick rattle-snake, who would slumber unseen and disregarded in his flannel waistcoat, at the Zoological Gardens in London, is visited with the greatest avidity: and a fish caught the night before, which happens to be two feet longer, or one foot thicker, than fishes of the same kind generally are, attracts a crowd of astonished spectators, and elicits a thousand interesting remarks and observations.

It turned out that Mr. Peckover was not at the library, nor was he gathering laver; on the contrary, he was sitting on a bench facing

the sea, at which he was looking wistfully, and evidently much depressed. When he saw Brag and the colonel advancing, he rose to meet them — and they perceived in a moment that something had worried him.

“ I am glad I have found you,” said he. “ Upon my life ! I am almost ashamed to say what I am going to say :—Mrs. Peckover tells me that she has engaged herself to go to Hastings to buy some French things at a smuggling shop, and that she shan’t be able to have the pleasure of receiving you at dinner to-day.”

“ Oh,” said the Colonel, “ never mind — don’t care about *that* :— some other day. As Mr. Brag and I are both staying at the same hotel, we can have our little “ *portions* ” *tête-à-tête*, and you ’ll let us come to you when you are quite disengaged.”

“ I saw the carriage going along the road,” said Jack :—“ capital steppers those bays—never saw better : all right that, sir, and no mistake.”

“ Why ! Mrs. Peckover tells *me*,” said the husband, “ that the Marquess of Whitechapel says they are the best pair of carriage-horses

in London. I don't trouble myself much about carriage-horses—she does :— ha, ha, ha !”

“ But suppose,” said the Colonel, “ as Mrs. Peckover will not be back in time for dinner, that you were to join us, *en garçon*, at the hotel.”

“ Why,” said Peckover, “ that would be very agreeable ; but if that were to be the order of the day, you two might as well dine with *me en garçon*, at our house ; only you see, Mrs. Peckover tells me that she shall be back early, and—”

“ Well,” said the Colonel, “ but see, if we were to dine with *you*, we might be in the way of Mrs. Peckover and her *dames d'honneur*, when they returned, tired, perhaps, with the excursion ; but if *you* came to us—”

“ Ah !” said the obedient husband, “ I don't think Mrs. Peckover would like *that* — no, I must be at home to receive her ; besides, there are several letters which Mrs. Peckover has desired me to write — and — no, some other time Mrs. Peckover will be most happy to receive you ; so let it be as it is. I am very sorry I did

not consult her beforehand. I did not know of her engagement ; have you forgiven me, gentlemen ?”

“ Oh, in course,” said Jack, “ and many thanks for your offer.”

“ Well,” said the Colonel to Brag, “ then we had better go to our inn, and order our dinner ; we will dine early, if you please.”

“ Whenever you like,” said Jack. “ I’m always agreeable, and no mistake.”

Jack — upon whose heart or mind, events which would have been of killing interest to others, made no deep impression—was so pleased by the encouragement of Colonel Stiffkey, that he entirely “ forgot his own griefs.” The melancholy fate of his sister, now and then flashed across his mind, but since he had ascertained the nature of her defection, he was less anxious for a letter from his mother, upon the subject. His defeat at the widow’s had almost become a matter of joke with him ; his rejection by Lord Tom was counterbalanced by the receipt of the money he had recovered from him, and so upon casting his eye over the

balance-sheet, the debtor and creditor sides seemed pretty equal; and just now the turn lay rather on the credit side, since he had made good his footing with his fashionable companion.

Still, one of those clouds which must almost constantly hang over the heads of quacks and pretenders, was rising in the horizon, in the shape of the arrival of young Gunnersbury. To quit Eastbourne, where he had strangely enough secured the society of such a man as Stiffkey, was most painful. Stiffkey looked down with an air of placid contempt upon the few inhabitants of Sea Houses, and yet he strolled about familiarly with Jack. This was agreeable in the highest degree to the little man's vanity, although really and truly the gay colonel fell into the association without reflecting or thinking about it for one moment. He had met Brag in good society, and in places where he felt evidently at home; he had heard Lord Tom speak of him in high terms, as what is called a "sporting chap," and, moreover, he was somebody to talk to. There can be little doubt if a more aristocratic friend had arrived,

Jack would have been cast off; for the colonel was one of those who, soaring eagle-high above the Brags of Jack's school, was known as one of the most decided tuft-hunters about town.

The colonel, too, observed with great care the different grades and degrees of the peerage in the selection of the invitations which he received; like Brag, he possessed, only upon the greater scale, what Foote calls, "the paltry ambition of levying and following titles; the poverty of fastening upon men of distinction in public, for no other reason but because of their rank, adhering to Sir John till the baronet is superseded by my lord, quitting the puny peer for an earl, and sacrificing all three to a duke."

It is greatly to be lamented in the present much-complained-of — how justly I do not pretend to decide — absence of talent in dramatic writing, that the rich and abundant humour of Foote, should, because it is certainly overlaid by much of that, which, in these days of delicacy and refinement would not be endured upon the stage, be altogether lost. Having quoted a line or two from one of his comedies, illustra-

tive of Colonel Stiffkey's passion for tufts, I cannot resist the temptation of extracting that part of the scene, in the "Lame Lover," in which he justifies the young lady's expressed opinion of his addiction to titles, and practically works it out. The passage is curious as well as humorous — humorous, because the satire strikes at all ages ; and curious, inasmuch as in twenty lines it familiarises us with customs and habits characteristic of the time at which it was written (the year 1770), of which now no trace or vestige remains.

Sir Luke, the tuft-hunter, is on the stage, with Serjeant Circuit and Charlotte, a servant enters and delivers a card to Sir Luke.

SIR LUKE.

(Reads) "Sir Gregory Goose desires the honour of Sir Luke Limp's company to dine. An answer is desired."—Gad-so ! a little unlucky—I have been engaged for these three weeks.

SERJEANT.

I find Sir Gregory is returned for the corporation of Fleece'em.

SIR LUKE.

Is he?—Oh, ho!—that alters the case.—George, give my compliments to Sir Gregory, and say I'll certainly come and dine there.—Order Joe to run to Alderman Inkle's, in Threadneedle-street: sorry can't wait upon him; but confined to my bed for two days with the influenza.

CHARLOTTE.

You make light, Sir Luke, of this sort of engagements?

SIR LUKE.

What can a man do? These fellows (when one has the misfortune to meet them) take scandalous advantage; teasing one with, “Pray when will you do me the honour, Sir Luke, to take your mutton with me? Do name the day.” What's to be done?—they are as bad as a beggar, who attacks your coach going up-hill, there's no getting rid of either without a penny to one, and a promise to the other; not but that upon these occasions there is no man in England more punctual than—”

Enter a servant, who gives SIR LUKE a letter.

—From whom?

SERVANT.

The Earl of Brentford, Sir Luke. The servant waits for an answer.

SIR LUKE.

Answer! — By your leave, Mr. Serjeant and Charlotte. (*Reads.*) “Taste for music!” — umph! — “Mons. Dupont—fail—dinner upon table at five.” Gad-so! — I hope Sir Gregory’s servant is not gone.

SERVANT.

Immediately, sir, on receiving the answer.

SIR LUKE.

Run after him, as fast as you can. Tell him—“quite in despair:—recollect an engagement that can’t in nature be missed:”—and be back in an instant. [Servant runs out.

CHARLOTTE.

You see, sir, the knight must give way to my lord.

SIR LUKE.

No: it isn’t that, my dear Charlotte. You saw that it was quite an extempore business.

No, it isn't for the title ; but, to tell you the truth, Brentford has more talent than any man in the world : it is *that*, which makes me fond of his house.

CHARLOTTE.

By the choice of his company he gives an unanswerable instance of *that*.

SIR LUKE.

You are right, my dear girl. But now, to give you a proof of his wit :—Brentford's finances are a little out of repair, which procures him some visits he would very gladly excuse. One morning a Welsh coachmaker came to him with his bill ; my lord had him up. “ You are called Mr. Lloyd, I think ? ” said Brentford. “ At your lordship's service, my lord.” “ What ! — Lloyd with an L ? ” “ With an L, my lord,” said the coachmaker. “ —Because,” said my lord, “ I have heard that in *your* part of the world, Lloyd and Floyd are synonymous—the very same names.” “ Always, my lord,” said the coachmaker. “ That,” says my lord, “ is rather unlucky : for, you must know, I am paying off my debts

alphabetically ; and in four or five years you might have come in with an F ; but I can give you very slight hopes for your L." — Ha, ha, ha !—(*Enter a servant abruptly, who runs against SIR LUKE.*)—Can't you see where you are running ? you rascal !

SERVANT.

Sir, his grace the Duke of ——

SIR LUKE.

Grace ! — where is he ? — where ?

SERVANT.

In his coach at the door. If you a'n't better engaged, would be glad of your company to go into the City, and take a dinner at Dolly's.

SIR LUKE.

In his own coach, did you say ?

SERVANT.

Yes, sir.

SIR LUKE.

With the coronets — or — ?

SERVANT.

I believe so.

SIR LUKE.

There 's no resisting that :— bid John run to Sir Gregory Goose's.

SERVANT.

He is already gone to Alderman Inkle's.

SIR LUKE.

Then do you step to the knight's. Hey!—no—you must go to my lord's. Hold, hold!—no—I have it:—step first to Sir Greg's; then pop in at Lord Brentford's, just as the company are going to dinner.

SERVANT.

What shall I say to Sir Gregory?

SIR LUKE.

Anything!—what I told you before.

SERVANT.

And what to my lord?

SIR LUKE.

What?—why, tell him that my uncle from Epsom—no,—that won't do,—for he knows I don't care a farthing for *him*. Hey!—tell him—hold!—I have it:—tell him, that as I was getting into my chair, to obey his lordship's commands, I was arrested by a couple of bailiffs, forced into a hackney-coach, and carried to “The Pied Bull” in the Borough.—I beg ten thousand pardons for keeping his

grace waiting — but his grace knows my misfor —

And away goes Sir Luke, without taking the slightest notice of either his learned friend the serjeant, or the dear girl Charlotte, both of whom he leaves perfectly satisfied with the justness of the character the latter had drawn of her “ lame lover.”

The spirit of this bit, and the peculiarities of contemporaneous society which it exhibits, will perhaps excuse the quotation. The duke inviting the knight to a dinner at Dolly’s; the knight getting into his chair to go to dine with the earl, and resting his apology upon an arrest by bailiffs, and a transfer to “ The Pied Bull” in the Borough, all sound marvellously strange to modern ears: and yet there are still those alive who well remember Foote, and who speak of him as a correct painter of manners, and whose inherent humour received additional brilliancy from his unquestioned power of “ holding the mirror up to Nature.”

Stiffkey, however, was not Limp, and when he and Jack strolled to the hotel to order their

repast, his countenance brightened up considerably when the waiter handed him a letter, which had been sent over by somebody coming from Hailsham, to which place it had been forwarded by the cross-road coach from Dover, and which he in a moment recognised as being from George Gunnersbury. His announcement to Jack of this happy arrival was not quite so well received by the little gentleman in the cords as he imagined it might have been.

Jack walked about the room while his new friend was reading the despatch, very much in doubt what the nature of its contents might be; and hoping, with all possible fervour and earnestness, that at all events it might announce some insurmountable obstacle in the way of the writer's visit to Eastbourne.

"Gad!" said Stiffkey, "George is a capital fellow; he will be here to-morrow afternoon; he writes the best letter of any fellow I know: he is particularly shy to strangers, but when one knows him thoroughly, his sly humour, that I spoke of this morning, is capital. He gives a description of a dinner party they had the other

day, which is admirable. He says, ‘ My dear good father, who is certainly the best-disposed general in his Majesty’s service, contrives to pick up the oddest tigers imaginable ; we had a day or two ago a German baron, who spoke no English, and, as nobody in our family, except my sister Eliza, understands three words of German, the poor gentleman —or, by courtesy —nobleman, had a bad time of it ; but we had also a fellow presented to us, under the fostering protection of a worthy friend of ours, who beat anything I had ever seen out of a travelling caravan,—an animal which certainly talked, and was therefore human, otherwise I should have taken it for an astounding cross in the breed between an ape and a horse-jockey : he affronted half the party, after having disgusted all of it, and made his escape from a pelting of decanters and wine-glasses by affecting to save some people from a stranded brig, near which he never went, but, instead of venturing ankle-deep into the water to rescue the sufferers, retired to bed ‘ half-seas-over,’ at least, so I have heard ; but

of these matters we will discourse more anon. I will be with you by six at the latest.'"

"Capital fun," said the Colonel, "isn't it? A cross between an ape and a horse-jockey! uncommon good!"

"Deuced funny, indeed!" said Jack, whipping his boots; "that's a capital fellow,—eh? straight up, right down, and no mistake. We shall have fun when *he* comes."

The detestation which Mr. George Gunnersbury's personal conduct had engendered in Jack's heart in the first instance, had now grown to its fullest growth; nor was it in the slightest degree qualified by the accidental omission of his name, or that of his introducer, (as Jack called it,) which would certainly have rendered the rest of the day more disagreeable than it promised to be in the company of the colonel. For the next, Jack, "in course," was prepared, —a letter from Town would call him away; and so everything seemed at the moment to turn up well, out of all the ills that threatened him; • his mother's answer to his letter from Hythe

would, in all probability, come to hand in the morning, which would give an air of consistency to his sudden departure, and satisfy his aristocratic friend of the absolute necessity for breaking up the agreeable party.

After having ordered dinner, the colonel and Jack strolled down on to the sands, wrote words on the sand with their sticks; sat down on the shingle; then wandered towards the watch-house; then came back and talked to the vestals at the baths,—inquired about laver,—found it too early in the season to have it good; then looked at the half-dozen carriages which were standing in the coach-house of the hotel; then went to Weston's, and bought some gingerbread nuts; then into the Library, and played with a little ball that went into a hole at the top of a twisted tube, and came out at the bottom, and rolled about a little, and at last settled into a hole of its own; then Stiffkey looked through a glass, and saw a schooner pitching disagreeably, and Jack went out and helped a little fat-faced child who wore a straw hat and feather, and trousers, and scarlet mo-

rocco slippers, on to the back of a donkey ; and then the colonel puffed little pellets out of a pea-shooter, across the shop, at a doll, which one of the young ladies of the establishment immediately removed ; and then Jack looked up at a little bay-window where a prettyish girl was sitting, who immediately got up and pulled the blind down ; and then they both betook themselves to throwing stones from the beach into the sea, during which operation they had the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Peckover and her party draw up to the door of *her* house, it then wanting one hour of their time of dining, and at least two of that, at which Peckover proposed their dining with *him*. This settled that affair, and convinced them, as Mrs. Peckover intended it should, that into *her* house no such persons as Jack should set foot. The colonel might have been received ; but the moment that Mrs. Peckover, with her lynx eyes, perceived Jack's unfortunate white cords and tops, from her balcony, *his* fate was decided. She taxed Peckover with the fact of his being one of his hunting friends, and P. could not endure

the trial;—it was so,—and admitted,—but then, Mrs. Peckover knew everything intuitively.

In divers and sundry pursuits, equally interesting and exciting with those which have just been described, the two new friends killed the enemy, until it was time to dress for dinner; they accordingly repaired to their rooms, Stiffkey's servant being in readiness to attend him, and Jack swearing at the incalculable stupidity of his man who was not there to dress *him*. Jack affected to bear it all with good-nature and complacency, and it all went very well till he actually found himself alone, and then it was that he began to calculate whither he should next go,—for go he must; the arrival of the hated Gunnersbury would be the signal for his extinction and extermination; but thought Jack, “At all events, I'm safe till the morning; and then the letter, and all that, will get me clear off, if it comes; and if it don't, I must write one myself.”

Accordingly Jack proceeded to dress, and made himself look uncommon nice, with an olive-green coat, and a Pomona-green waist-

coat, and a pair of uncommonly smart black kerseymere trousers, with stockings and shoes to match : in short, he felt that he had done it ; and when he made allowance for the absence of a servant, the approbation of his elegant friend would no doubt be unqualified : and so down he went to the dining-room, where, in a few minutes, he was joined by Stiffkey, who without any effort had achieved that, which Jack could never have accomplished with a two-hundred horse power. He looked like a gentleman.

The dinner was served, and put down. Stiffkey proposed some of Toone's sherry, and one bottle of champaign between the two ;—should it be *moussu*?—well iced ;—certainly—the soup was—soup ;—the fish not entirely blameable, and whatever other things there were, were all tolerable,—each in its way. Claret followed the champaign ; and in about half an hour after they sat down, they were tranquilly sipping their wine, with a few watering-place pears and cricket-ball peaches by way of dessert, discoursing upon topics the most interesting and agreeable.

"If I stayed here," said the colonel, "I should get some house or lodging; this hotel is all very well, but it isn't quite the thing; and yet I don't know about a house for a single man,—and, probably, I shall go back with George in two or three days."

"There's certainly a difference," said Jack, "between this and the 'Ship' at Dover: the 'Ship' is, in course, the only house fit to go to there: for my own part, I think that *is* the worst of travelling;—the chances and changes,—and then to be 'run to earth' here without a slavey. It is the very deuce,—eh!—uncommon slow, and no mistake."

"Help yourself to some claret," said the colonel, cracking a biscuit; "yes,—it *is* a bore to be sure. I think you live in Grosvenor street, when you are in town?—at least I have seen your name on a door there."

"Yes," said Jack; "I'm very little at home;—I'm what you call, everywhere;—I hate being still; whenever I can, I run down to a little place I have out of town, where I shut myself up whenever I am able."

"Have you much wood about your place?" said Stiffkey.

Jack recollected the carpenter's-shop, and said, confidently,—“Yes, lots.”

“Well,” said the colonel, “I declare I thought you would have married that Mrs. Dallington.”

“No,” said Jack; “there are many things more than meet the ear;—there *are* objections,—so I made way for those, who couldn't make their own.”

At this moment the waiter entered the room, and announced that the London coach had just arrived, and that a lady and gentleman, on the outside, were inquiring for Mr. Brag.

“For me!” said Jack, a thousand horrid ideas rushing into his brain.

“Yes, sir,” said the waiter, “they are in the hall.”

This announcement startled Jack most tremendously:—a lady enquiring for him—just arrived. Who could it be?—neither the widow Dallington nor Miss Blanche Englefield—certainly not. But might it not be Anne—Nancy? That she had been most violently agitated at be-

holding him, was perfectly certain ; that the only account he had received of her feelings or wishes as to breaking off their acquaintance for ever, was derived from her husband, who might have assumed a tone which, after all he was not justified by facts in adopting. Perhaps she still loved him,—still resolved to prove her affection : after struggling for years, her firmness had yielded, and she had eloped from her new husband to pass the rest of her life with him.

The first flash of this thought was delightful : interest — adventure — escape — pursuit — vanity — notoriety — action for crim. con. — damages—a duel—“a bullet in the thorax”— all whirled through his well-curled head, as he jumped from his seat at table to shield and screen the interesting object of his hopes and wishes from the gaze of Stiffkey, until he was quite sure of his bird ;—when, before he could reach the door, his eyes were greeted, and his ears astounded, by the appearance of his exemplary mother, and a cry of “Jack, my boy, how are you ?” uttered by that respectable matron.

“ My dear ma’am,” said Jack, almost petri-

fied, and extending his arms, — not for an embrace, but to endeavour to prevent her farther entrance into the room — “ what on earth has brought you here ?”

“ The stage-coach,” said the old lady. “ Come, git out of the way ; let us come in and sit down.”

Saying which, she pushed by her son, to the astonishment of Stiffkey, who immediately rose from his seat.

“ Don’t disturb yourself, sir,” said the lady ; “ there’s plenty of room : — only coming outside, the wind blows up all about one, and I’m as cold as charity—though Jim made me have a glass of hot rum and water at the last place we stopped at.”

“ Very nice beverage, ma’am,” said Stiffkey, with one of his most graceful bows.

“ My dear ma’am,” said Jack, “ wouldn’t you rather have another room ? We have scarcely finished dinner, and it would be more comfortable to have a sitting-room to yourself.”

“ They haven’t got another sitting-room disengaged,” said the lady ; “ Jim asked them.

No matter : what 's good enough for *you*, Jack, is good enough for *me* ; so this will do for us till bed-time."

" My dear colonel," said Jack —

" My dear sir," said Stiffkey, " no apologies. I am too glad to see any friends of yours — if I don't intrude."

" Intrude !" said the lady — " not a bit : we have no secrets, sir. To be sure, things have turned out queerish : however, you have as much right here as we, and we as you — so we won't make no words of that. Why, you dine late, Jack !"

" No, on the contrary, rather early," said Jack, perfectly at a loss what to do, overcome by the unexpectedness of the visit, from its being so particularly ill-timed, and by the malicious determination which Stiffkey had too evidently formed of not stirring : indeed, the announcement of the fact, that there was no other sitting-room disengaged, would of itself have justified his remaining in what really was his own apartment, even if he had not wished

to stay out a scene which promised him some amusement.

"Jack," said the lady, "I want you just to look out and see if Jim is getting in all the bundles and things."

"Who is Jim?" said Jack in an under tone.

"Jim Salmon," said the lady.

"What! is *he* with you?"

"Yes," said his mother, "where else should he be?"

At this moment Jem made his appearance, dressed in a tight light green coat, and a buff-waistcoat, with striped blue and white cotton trousers, made tightish to his plump figure, a coloured check handkerchief round his neck, and a white hat stuck on one side of his head, with a bunch of whitish-red curls sticking out from under it.

"Ah!" said Jem, "Brag, how d'ye do? — "didn't expect us, I reckoned—skimming down here—eh? Titsy would come—agreeable surprise—twig?"

"Very agreeable, indeed!" said Brag, draw-

ing back somewhat indignantly from the familiar approach of the *ci-devant* shopboy.

“ Have you got all the parcels up to the bed-room, J. S. ?” said the lady.

“ Yes, Titsy,” said Jem.

“ Got the umbrella, J. S. ?” said the lady.

“ No, Titsy,” replied Jem, “ but I ’ll be after it in no time—twig ?”

Jack’s dismay and mortification had now risen to a considerable height. What could have induced his mother to make Jem Salmon her travelling companion? — what could have induced her to undertake the journey? — or what Jem could mean by calling his respectable parent “ Titsy,” were to him questions unsolvable. One thing, however, appeared necessary: the old lady had evidently planted herself for the evening where she was; Stiffkey, who had scarcely begun his wine, and had no engagement elsewhere, had quietly deposited himself in an arm-chair: Jack, therefore, felt it absolutely essential to introduce the colonel to their fair visiter, resolving, afterwards, to check her in her conversation, so as

to prevent the developement of all the real circumstances of the case, and trust to chance and impudence to wriggle through and out of this most "untoward affair."

"This, Colonel," said Jack, "is my mother: — Colonel Stiffkey, madam."

Mutual bows ratified the treaty.

"I say," said the lady, "put a chair for Jim. P'raps, he is taking a drop of something."

"Mr. Salmon, ma'am," said Brag — "is he coming in?"

"I s'pose so," said the lady.

"Oh!" said Brag.

"Here he is," said the lady. "All right now, Jim?"

"Yes, Titsy," said Jem.

Jack's astonishment at the repetition of this "familiar word" was too great to admit of concealment, and accordingly betrayed itself in his countenance.

"Ah!" said his mother, "that's it — isn't it, Jim? He doesn't know all."

"No," said Jem — "don't twig, Titsy."

"I told you, John, I should surprise you, one of these days," said his mother:—"J. S. and I are married!"

"Married!" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes," said Jem, "Titsy is Mrs. Salmon—d'ye twig?"

"My dear mother," said Jack, "are you serious?"

"No, Jack," replied Mrs. James Salmon,—for such she really was,—"never less serious in my life since your daddy died. All true:—Jim and I were married last Friday was a week at Hornsey church, and passed the honey-day—we couldn't stop out longer on account of the business—at 'The Sluice House.'"

"This *is* really a surprise!" said Stiffkey, sipping his claret, looking, how—it is impossible to describe.

Jack was, as Major Downing says, "catawampusly stumped," and could say nothing.

"It oughtn't to be, sir," said Mrs. Salmon, addressing herself to the dandy. "Jack knowed well enough what a lone life I led. He never came near me—never, except for

what you could get, Jack — did you? He advised me to marry, sir — and I could tell you a pretty story about *that*, if I liked — eh! Jack? — the pickle-shop. Well, so things went on, till at last — praise afore people's faces sometimes spoils them — I took Jim for better or worse."

"A very prudent resolve, indeed, ma'am," said the Colonel, taking a huge pinch of snuff.

"My dear Colonel," said Jack, "I am sure we ought to apologize for troubling you with our family affairs. I wish — eh! — isn't there any other room—are you sure?"

"A'nt I?" said Jem — "first thing as I axed about — twig?"

"Get yourself something warm, Jim," said the ancient bride: "I'm sure if the cold once gets into your poor little stomach, you'll have no rest all night. I know what it is myself to be troubled with cold: — and I tell you what, Johnny, we shall want a bit of something by way of supper; for though we had three or four mutton-chops at Godstone, which were very nicely done, and fine meat too, and un-

common fat, still that was some time ago—
and I get peckish at night somehow."

"Fat!" said Mr. Salmon—"yes, they *were*
fat—reminded me of the shop, Brag—twig?"

"I should venture to recommend," said the
colonel with the most studied politeness,
"something to drink—a glass of claret—
or——"

"Oh, Lor' no!" said Mrs. Salmon, "no
claret for me, sir: as I used to say to my poor
dear first—Jack's father—don't talk to me
of claret: it's a waste of time as well as of
money to drink them sort of thin stuffs! If
Jack was to have behaved like what he is, he
might have asked me to take some kind of re-
freshment before this; for since the rum and
water at—what do they call that last place we
stopped at, Jemes?"—

"Wholesome, Titsy," said the bridegroom.

"Hailsham, mother,—Hailsham," said Jack,
"is the name of the place."

"I haven't had the least drop as is, in my
mouth, since Godstone," continued Mrs. Salmon.

"And there," said Salmon, "the hale was
uncommon 'eavy."

"What! ma'am," said Stiffkey, "had you a storm, coming down?"

"No, no," said Jack, — who, although he could not, as his mother would have said, "exasperate" the *h* himself, was nervously alive to the absurdity of anybody else who laboured under a similar incapacity— "ale—the ale was heavy."

"Come, Mr. Brag," said the Colonel, "the wine is with you."

"Yes," said Jack, "and I'm not the man to stop it— eh? I like it to go— keep circulating, as we say, right up, straight down, and no mistake?"

"What do they charge, John, for claret here?" said Mrs. Salmon, addressing her son.

"Can't say, I am sure," said Jack.

"I say," said Salmon, leaning over towards his wife, with his hand up to his mouth to hide a very audible whisper— "that's *it*— they never pay!— twig? But, I say, Titsy, what will you have— something hot?"

"Whatever you like, dear," said the respectable matron.

"I tell you what," said Salmon, "I'll just go out and brew for you myself. I know your taste—eh?—don't I? Sugar, rum, nutmeg—eh?—twig?"

With this most affectionate speech Mr. Salmon left the room, Jack regularly used up, and the colonel, who was now convinced that his particular friend must be the identical creature described in Gunnersbury's letter from Dover, having thrown himself back in his chair, waited to hear what might happen next.

"Sad business about Kitty!" said Mrs. Salmon.

"Yes, mother," said Jack, "but don't you think we might as well defer any discussion of that sort till the morning?"

"Why," said Mrs. Salmon, "I don't know; if the gentleman is *your* friend, there's no harm speaking out before him,—and I can't stop here long. I thought I would surprise you; and I think a bit of a-washing to-morrow in the sea won't do me no harm. It's now two-and-thirty—aye, let me see, more than that—five-and-thirty years since I was in a bath of any

kind, and I thought if I could manage to see *you*, and tell you all about my wedding, and talk over poor Kitty's business, and get a bit of a wash, all under one, it would be doing a great deal; and as the whole front of the shop has been new painted, and James has had all those dangling dips, which you didn't like, taken down—I said to him, ‘Jim,’ says I, ‘now we've got this letter from John, what d'ye say of a bit of a holiday till the stink of the paint goes off, and then we can tell him all, how, and about it?’ Don't you think I was right?’”

“Perfectly, ma'am,” said Jack, “perfectly—only I don't quite comprehend what you are talking about.”

“I say, sir,” said Mrs. Salmon, appealing to the Colonel, who was enjoying the scene, and gathering in, all he could collect, wherewith to amuse his friend Gunnersbury when he should arrive—“isn't that good? John's father and I carried on a most excellent business for five-and-twenty years:—I've got the shop-cards in my pocket now, with the new name introduced—‘Salmon, successor to Brag:’—and

yet he doesn't comprehend what I am talking about when I tell him about new painting the shop, and dowsing the danglers, as Jim says."

" My dear mother," said Jack, " hadn't you better go to bed? I assure you this travelling —eh?—don't you think—it has upset you?"

" Upset! no," said Mrs. Salmon, " I'm not going to bed at half-past seven o'clock to please the pope—no, nor the lord-mayor neither: I'm going to have a nice bit of sum'mut for supper. Here, John, jump up and open the door—I hear Jim knocking: he has got the grog, or whatever it is."

Jack, utterly discomfited, did as he was bid.

" Scaldings!" cried Mr. Salmon, his father-in-law—" scaldings!—here it is, Titsy, as hot as hot. Mind your eye, Brag—shut the door: that's right—clever lad—eh?—twig?"

Things had gone so far at this period of the business, that Jack, seeing it was perfectly impossible longer to blind the colonel to the real state of the case, gave himself up in despair, and felt convinced that the morning must afford him safety in flight. The coolness of Stiffkey

during the whole of the proceedings, the unbounded civility with which he treated the old lady, the dignified goodnature with which he permitted Mr. Salmon to tread over his feet, and even scatter the “honey-dew” of the hot mixture, which he had himself prepared and brought into the room, over his shins, killed Jack, who knew by experience the mode in which good-breeding receives the coarsenesses and vulgarities of the world, and saw that the whole fabric of his favour with the colonel, in erecting which he had passed the entire day, was fast crumbling to atoms.

“Shall we have some more wine?” said the colonel to Brag, doing the elegant with as much unaffected grace as if Jack’s mother had been a duchess who had married a fool for the sake of his title.

“As you like, colonel,” said Jack, “only I fear—”

“Fear nothing,” said Stiffkey, “I never was happier; and if I don’t bore you——”

“Oh!” said Jack bowing.

“Not in the least, sir,” said Salmon, “we

are too happy to have you stay. I 've always heard say that it is one of the great advantages of these watering-places getting into genteel company—eh!—twig?"

Jack could have annihilated the shopboy, although he *was* his father-in-law.

"But, as I was saying, John," said Mrs. Salmon, "because, as the gentleman tells us, we *may* speak out before *him*—poor Kitty made a bad mess of it; she was always a wayward girl,—she quite run away from George, at last,—so he writes me,—went and lived with other people,—just as it happened;—all came from drinking, John," here the old lady mended her draught. "Wasn't it shocking, sir?"

"Dreadful ma'am!" said Stiffkey, "very dreadful."

"My dear mother," said Jack, "don't trouble the Colonel."

"The trouble is a pleasure," said Stiffkey; "some unfortunate creature, who, being in the habit of drinking, I suppose, ran away from her husband: a thing that will happen, ma'am, amongst servants even of the best character."

"Servants, sir?" cried Mrs. Salmon.

"My dear mother," said Jack, "never mind."

"But I do mind, John," said the lady, who had just arrived at a point of obfuscation, at which the main points under discussion are always forgotten, and the minor incidents shine forth most brilliantly—"why should the gentleman call *my* daughter Kitty a servant?—she never was a servant! she made a foolish match,—ran away with a serjeant—a reglar common soger,—and then ran away *from* him,—all ill treatment, sir, and the heat of the climate;—and—" here Mrs. Salmon burst into a flood of tears; whereupon, Jem, in order to enlighten the Colonel, and utterly annihilate Jack, gave him a familiar tap on the shoulder, and said, in a confidential tone, "bolted,—altogether—quite—entirely,—twig?"

The Colonel drew back shrinkingly from the unexpected familiarity, and signified by a distant bow that he was sufficiently aware of the circumstances to which the lady had so feelingly alluded.

"However," said Mrs. Salmon, recovering, "what's done can't be undone; she is now gone to her long home, and it's of no use raking up old grievances: she had a good education, and made a bad use of it; and what's more, she was cheated into marrying him; and Nance Brown,—she was at the bottom of it, and yet she has contrived to get up in the world; and so has George himself,—how, I don't pretend to say."

"My dear mother," said Jack, "let us talk of something else; it cannot be very entertaining to the colonel to hear all our grievances."

"Entertaining!" said Mrs. Salmon, "I'm sure I don't mean to entertain anybody. When I feels, I speaks; and why shouldn't I, John?—an't it natural for a mother to feel?"

"Don't take on so, Titsy," said Salmon. "There's some cold boiled leg of mutton and pickles coming; they are only waiting to get a bit of potato mashed. I didn't forget to order your early supper,—twig?"

"You are a kind-hearted creetur," said Mrs. Salmon to her husband, "and that makes one

feel neglect from others the more ; however, we won't talk about that. J. S. dear, tell John what alterations we are going to make at home."

" To be sure," said Jem. " I say, Brag, you know that big copper on the left-hand of the melting-house ? I mean to have that put farther back, and git a door made into the lane, behind the cart-house, so as we can bring the fat in all reg'lar, without coming through the front-shop,—twig ?"

" Yes, yes," said Jack, " a very good arrangement ; —and no mistake."

" Then, I mean to clap a sky-light on the top of the back-parlour," continued Mr. Salmon, " which will make it uncommon lively to what it was. Why, in the old gentleman's time, when I was a bit of a boy, it used to be as dark and as dismal as the Plenipotentiary on Milbank,—twig ?"

" And round it, John," said Mrs. Salmon, " I mean to have ever so many flower-pots with gerenums, and fooshies, and you can't think how nice they will look in the summer if the cats don't knock 'em down in the night."

"Here's the mutton, Titsy," said Jem.

And sure enough, in came the waiter, accompanied by a female assistant with a tray, on which the promised leg appeared, with pickles and other condiments,—a dish of mashed potatoes, and a plate of chopped onions. The maid spread out a second table, and speedily dressed it in a snowy cloth: the waiter handed and arranged the viands; and while doing so, announced that some hot chops were on their way.

"Waiter, why don't you bring us another bottle of claret?" said Stiffkey, to Jack's most perfect and entire mortification; who, with all his vanity and self-love, could not shut his eyes to the certainty that his elegant friend Stiffkey was merely prolonging his stay, in order to be amused at his expense; and equally well aware that his mother and the creature whom he was told was his father-in-law, would, in the course of the evening, afford him as much entertainment as he could reasonably expect.

"Now, Titsy," said Mr. Salmon, "let me put you a chair by the table,—ready ag'in the

chops come. I suppose it's a compliment to ask you to join us?" added the engaging Jem, himself to Colonel Stiffkey and addressing Jack.

"We have just dined," said Colonel Stiffkey, with the most imperturbable gravity.

The old bride and young bridegroom having drawn close to the board, Jack considered he might contrive to manage a few minutes' explanatory conversation with the colonel, and therefore drew his chair nearer to him, as if with a view of facilitating, what an Irish gentleman would call,—the circulation of the bottle between the two.

"To be sure," whispered Jack, whose whole character for smartness and sprightliness, and that sort of slang conversation in which he ordinarily indulged, had been completely destroyed by the appearance of visitors, not only unexpected *then*, but never to be expected in their present relative position—"To be sure, Colonel, there *are* odd things in the world. Who, when we sat down here, would have expected



this curious coincidence. By Job ! what folly, —eh ? a woman at her time of life to throw herself away upon a fellow of that sort ! ”

“ Very odd,” said Stiffkey, “ in an equally low tone of voice ; “ but, at that time of life, these turns will happen. Of what profession is the young man ? ”

“ A candle-maker,” said Jack, whispering directly in the colonel’s ear ; having hoisted up one of his little fat hands, trumpet-wise, to prevent the affectionate chop-eaters from hearing the avowal, and hoping, even at this straw-catching minute, to devolve the whole of the responsibility of so disgraceful a business upon his respectable mother, leaving it to be inferred that she had been love-led into a connexion much beneath herself.”

“ Oh ! ” said Stiffkey.

“ Love levels ranks : lords down to cellars bears,
And bids the candle-maker walk up stairs.”

“ Very true,” said Jack, “ all right,—and no mistake.”

“ I say, John,” said Mr. Salmon, who fortunately had not heard this little colloquy, “ just

come here : did you ever see closer fat than this cold mutton ? I should like to have twenty or thirty ton of it down, ready for melting. I could sport a dash of hog in him, and no fear of spluttering."

" It 's curious to see," said Jack, in an under tone to the colonel, " how, when a man sets himself to trade, he turns everything to shop."

" Very," said Stiffkey.

And so it is ; but it was much more curious to observe the total alteration produced in Jack's manner and language by the unexpected visitation of his parent, and her hopeful help-mate. It seemed as if he was altogether unstarched ; his hair seemed to uncurl itself, and upon his pale cheek, and contracted brow, evidently lay the whole weight of his mortification and dismay.

" Titsy," said Salmon, " don't you malt ?"

" No, my dear J. S." replied the lady. " I'm all for something more in the warm line."

" That 's right ;" said Salmon. " Rum and water, hot, I consider,—eh ?—twig ?"

" Exactly so," replied Mrs. Salmon. " I

can't think how you two," turning herself round, and addressing the gentlemen at the other table, "can go on drinking that wishy-washy stuff,—paying, too, so much as you do for it. As I said before, I consider it a dead waste of time,—there's no goodness, no nourishment in it:—they call riding in a hack cab, taking danger at eight-pence a mile;—but I call claret-drinking getting the stomach-ache at ten shillings a bottle."

"Little and good is Titsy's motto," said Jem.

"Yes, J. S. dear," said the matron, smiling; "that's the reason I took *you*."

"Well said, Titsy," said Salmon, "she shan't be a bad un after all."

That Mr. John Brag was not blessed by nature with any superabundant proportion of feeling, we have had several opportunities of ascertaining; but it is only fair to say, that during this, in every point of view humiliating scene to the pretender, his uneasiness—misery it might almost be called—upon his own personal account, was not equal to that which

he felt on account of his mother. That she had made herself, at her time of life, a fool, by marrying her shop-man, or shop-boy rather, was bad enough ; but such things — or things as extraordinary and silly—happen, *matrimonially*, every day ; and besides, he palliated her absurdity in this affair by the reflection that he himself had first advised her to marry somebody, in order to rescue his name from the trammels of trade, and that he had probably accelerated the consummation of her discredit by his facetious pranks upon Waterloo Bridge, when he himself contrived to expose her infirmities for the amusement of his fashionable friends ; but, what *did* nevertheless pain even *him*, was the sight of his parent—of the being who had given him birth—associated with such a creature as Jem Salmon, and by him and his endearing diminutives and nick-names rendered an object of universal ridicule. To hear this wretched animal calling a woman three times his age and four times his size, *Titsy*, was really and truly tormenting, separated from any prospective feeling of certainty that the degradation of

his once respectable relative would form the subject of Stiffkey's most animated description of the humours of Eastbourne, to be hereafter given to his expected visitor and surrounding friends.

"I say, John," said Mrs. Salmon, warming with her refreshment, "John, when you were at home last, you did not think I should get the start of you, however much you advised it. I haven't heard of your marrying a Lady Sally, or a Lady Susan, with forty or fifty thousand pounds tacked to the title; — I've heard of your doings though, in other places."

"Probably," said Jack, "one can't help being talked about."

"I mean with Mrs. ——, what's the name? J. S." said Mrs. Salmon; — "up there, by ——"

"Dallington, d 'ye mean," said Jem.

"Yes, that's it," said the matron; "we heard that story last week — not half a day after it happened."

"What is that?" said Stiffkey, *sotto voce* to Brag.

"I'm sure I don't know what my mother means," said Jack ; nor did he, nor could he comprehend how she came to know the name of the lady.

"Don't you, Johnny ? I do," said his mother ; "so does J. S., don't *you* ? Now, I think I owe you a turn, for playing me off on the bridge, so I'll have a laugh at your expense — all in fun, now it's over."

"My dear mother," said Jack, "pray don't talk about that affair."

"No, not a syllable," said Mrs. Salmon ; "only we know all about your making love to the two sisters at once — don't we, Jemes ?"

"I believe we do too, Titsy," said Salmon ; "two at a time, that's all, John — eh — twig ?"

"What, ma'am ?" said Stiffkey, who found he had completely succeeded in making Mrs. Salmon consider him "quite the gentleman ;" "did our friend try his ambidextrous fortune with both ladies ?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Salmon, "about

whose fortune he tried; all I know he got none — between two stools, Johnny —”

— “I know, my dear mother,” said Jack, “the proverb is by no means new.”

“No,” said the lady, “nor the moral of it neither; the way we come to know of it was through the lady’s housekeeper; they deal with us for coarse stock, stores and rush-lights.”

“And ile, Titsy,” said Salmon.

“Yes,” said the lady; “and so Jemes, you see, went round collecting, and so — but you tell the story, J. S., dear.”

“Oh, don’t trouble yourself, sir,” said Jack.

“Pray go on, Mr. Salmon,” said Stiffkey.

“Why, I tell you how it was,” said Salmon; “I was a just stepping round and collecting, as Titsy says,—for we had an unmerciful heavy bill to pay our broker, and I happens to call at Mrs. Dallington’s—so—the family was just gone out o’ town—lets see—when was it, Titsy? — one day late in last week—and so I sees the housekeeper—Mrs. Cropper—I know’d her in

her last place — so I tells her about our little account, and she says, says she, looking at the bill, ‘I wonder, now, if your master’s any relation to the little man which my missus sent away a night or two ago, with a flea in his ear.’”

“ I must beg,” said Jack,—“ I—shall leave the room if this goes on any farther—I don’t want to know the secret history of people of my acquaintance, squeezed out of servants—I don’t want to know about any little man.”

“ No, love, *do* hear,” said Mrs. Salmon ; “ it only shows how things gits round.”

“ So, I says, says I,” continued Salmon, “ I can’t judge unless you tell me what sort of a little man he is.—‘ Why,’ she says, says she, ‘ his name’s Brag—he’s a smartish kind of a chap, with a curly head ; and as full of the gab as an egg’s full of meat.’—‘ A sporting chap?’ says I.—‘ Always a hunting,’ says she.—So then I just rubs up my hair, and puts up my collar, and gives her a bit of a take-off of you, jist after your manner, ‘ smack, smooth, right up, straight down, and no mistake.’ Whereupon Mrs. Cropper—she’s an uncommon

good-natured old thing — she claps her two hands together and says, says she, ‘By gosh that’s he — that’s the chap as wanted somehow to marry my mistress and her sister too, and got kicked out accordingly,’—twig?’

“Mr. Salmon,” said Brag, trembling with rage, or something else, and looking as white as a sheet, “the unfortunate connexion which my mother has formed with you, keeps me quiet — if — it was not for that —”

“Don’t agitate yourself,” said Stiffkey, with the most perfect *sang froid*. “Mr. Salmon means no harm, I’m sure.”

“Harm, not he,” said Mrs. Salmon, “he’s only lively, and wants a bit of fun.”

“Fun! the devil, ma’am!” said Jack: “I shall say nothing; but as for staying in this room a minute longer, I will not; nor, ma’am, will I ever set foot in any place in which that person is to be found. I never was consulted in *your* match — and sure you might run your own race without coming crossing and jostling me on *my* course. Colonel,” added Jack, “I am quite sure this bu-

siness must be as disagreeable to you as it is disgusting to me— perhaps you will follow my example. I shall be glad, ma'am, to say a few words to *you* in the morning — and I wish *you* a good evening."

" I am extremely sorry, Mr. Brag," said the Colonel, " that you are annoyed. It only seems a little playfulness,—it *must* be all a joke."

" No joke at all, sir," said Mrs. Salmon ; " it's all true, only what I say to Jack is, them as throws stones shouldn't live in glass houses."

" Well, I'm sure, Titsy," said Jem. " I'd no notion of this blow up when we came in — I meant to be all pleasant and agreeable."

" Come, Colonel," said Jack.

" Good evening, ma'am," said the Colonel. " I suppose I *must* go, but I assure you I am particularly sorry to leave such agreeable society."

" Where's Jack ?" said Mrs. Salmon.

" Gone out, Titsy," said Jem.

" Like one of his own rush-lights, ma'am,"

said the Colonel, who immediately followed him, putting his finger to his nose, archly, as he quitted the room.

“Bravo, Colonel,” said Salmon;—“that’s a prime chap, anyhow—eh? Who’d have thought of John’s bristling up in that kind of hedge-hog fashion. I’m sure I only wanted to give the Colonel a little touch of *my* way of taking off.”

“Yes, my dear J. S.,” said the matron, “and the Colonel seems to have returned the compliment. I’m sorry you offended Jack, for I wanted you to be friends.”

“Then, Titsy, why did you set me on,” said Jem;—“you know’d when once my spirit’s up, I can’t stop it.”

“Why, somehow,” said Mrs. Salmon, “the rum and water was strong.”

“ ‘Twas stiffish — twig?” said Salmon.

“However,” continued the lady, “a fine morning is a good peace-maker, and I dare say we shall all be friends again for the short time we have to stay; besides, to tell *you* the truth, I never quite believed that Mrs. Cropper’s story.”

"I'd trust her with my life," said James, "as steady a going cretur, full of fun as she is, as ever trod shoe leather,—takes a tip of two pounds per annum, and is quite satisfied; can't get off with Mr. Evans, the butler, for twice that. No, no, Titsy, as Jack says, leave me alone to deal with the fair sex."

"Oh you devil!" said Mrs. Salmon, "ring the bell, J. S., and let us retire for the night; early as it is, I'm tired, and a little vexed into the bargain."

"Don't worry yourself, Titsy," said James. "I dare say it will be all right to-morrow—eh? smack, smooth, and no mistake,—twig?"

"Now, J. S.," said Mrs. Salmon, "don't go on doing *that*, that's a dear—there's nothing folks is so sore about, as being taken off in that way—don't do it.—Johnny lives in good company, as you see; it is true he has got a particular way of talking, and all that you said about what he had done, and all about the ladies, and Cropper and all, never stirred him no more than you could stir a fire without a poker; till you come to mimic him—that it was set his blood up. I

saw his little eyes winking, winking, and his face get as white as a sheet, and I'm sure I never meant to put him in a passion—only—no—it was that ——”

“ Are you cross, Titsy ?” said Jem.

“ Not a bit cross,” said Mrs. Salmon, “ only he's as touchy as touch-wood — so don't go and aggravate him to-morrow.”

“ I promise and wow, Titsy,” said Salmon, “ I will *that* do—only you see, being as I consider now, his superior, what the sogers call commanding officer, I think he might have treated me with a little more respect.”

“ Never mind *that*,” said the lady, “ ring the bell, and let's bundle. I'm dead tired — the wind blew so fresh — and I can tell you the top of a coach is not as soft to sit on, as the cushion of my arm-chair, I'm all shaken to pieces.”

J. S. did as he was bid, and the chamber-maid speedily appeared to attend the matronly bride to her chamber, J. S. remaining below as he thought it proper to do, until he was summoned to his roost. This dull interval

he occupied by imbibing a refreshing glass of some favourite mixture, and in reflecting upon the unexpected sort of reception he had met with from his son-in-law. However, he had scarcely finished his "tipple," as he called it, when he was summoned by the attendant sylph, the respected Mrs. Salmon not occupying any very considerable period of time in making her preparations for what she called "tumbling in." —Jem drained his goblet, and ascended the stairs, and "maid-directed," found the door of the room which contained his treasure.

By a preconcerted arrangement the waiter had been engaged to go, or send over, to the library, whither *faute de mieux*, the colonel and Jack had retreated from the unbearable fire of Mr. Salmon's extraordinary liveliness, to let them know when the happy pair were gone to bed, inasmuch as they might return to their temporary domicile, and enjoy a few tranquil moments before *they* retired to rest. The moment, therefore, that the Salmonean savages had "quitted the ground," a message was conveyed to the dandy and his friend,

informing them that the coast was clear ; and this message arrived at the library precisely at the moment when Jack had declined playing any longer billiards, because he knew nothing of the game, and because he preferred *ecarté*.

The word *ecarté* sounded mellifluously to the colonel's ear — *he* could play the game a little ; should they go back to the hotel and try a hand or two — first directing his servant to open the windows and “ freshen ” the room — order broiled bones at twelve, and not play later than two — positively ?

Brag, the moment he heard this proposition from the colonel, was convinced that all was right, and “ no mistake ; ” the absurdities of his poor mother, and the grossnesses of his youthful father-in-law had evidently made no impression. The colonel saw the gentleman in *him*, and the very suggestion of broiled bones, ventilated rooms, and *ecarté* till two, settled the affair. It was all arranged, and Stiffkey’s man was to teach the willing hostess of the hotel how to concoct a particular sort of punch, which Sir Stumpey Dubs, a wealthy friend of his master, had in-

vented,— of which composition, averse as the colonel was from strong drink, the weakest ingredient was Jamaica rum, the whole compound forming a sort of beverage which reminded you, in the morning, that you had swallowed it the night before, by a sensation very much like that which would have been occasioned by the dislocation of every limb belonging to your body.

Colonel Stiffkey was the most perfect “gentleman”—not to use the term as Brag would use it, but in its purest and most unquestioned shape. He was not brilliant as a wit, but he played his part as well as his associates in the every-day give-and-take conversation of the best society. The immovable quietude and imperturbable civility which he displayed before the bride and bridegroom, were part of his system. Nobody who did not know his heart of hearts could find out whether he was delighted or distressed by that, which was passing before him. His mind, with regard to Brag, had been for some hours made up; and in all probability the next morning

would be the last on which he even would endeavour to recollect his name: but before that morning came, there intervened an evening,—that evening was to be passed, somehow. Mr. Brag preferred *ecarté*; we have seen the preparatory arrangements in consequence of that preference.

Stiffkey and Brag walked back from the library to their sitting-room, whence had been removed, besides the nuisances, which had removed themselves, all the “provender,” upon which they had battened. A card-table had been placed by the colonel’s man, and a small table by the side of it, on which stood two well-sized glasses, out of which they were to imbibe a certain quantity of the West-Indian mumbo-jum, punctilioously prepared according to the recipe of Sir Stumpy.

The room had resumed its former pleasing aspect. Jack found no difference in the manner of his friend, who, in the kindest manner, kept periodically praising England as the only nation perhaps in the world which furnished the brightest ornaments to society from trades

and professions — throwing in an agreeable observation now and then, that if such were the facility in other countries, the intellects of the people would prevent their availing themselves of it ; and, in short, that what the French sage had said of our population in comparing it with our porter, that the top was all froth, the bottom all dregs, and the middle the “ stout and efficient,” was most true. This encouragement, wonderfully aided by the arrival of Stiffkey’s servant with a closely covered jug of the invaluable compound, raised Jack’s spirits so high, that for the moment he threw overboard all the previous occurrences of the evening, and felt satisfied in his own mind that the fact of his mother’s having married injudiciously, could and would have no possible effect upon his future fashionable career.

“ Now then,” said the Colonel, “ taste *that* : if you don’t like it, I’m mistaken.”

Jack filled a glass and sipped. “ Like it !— Gad ! who wouldn’t — eh ? — goes down like milk, and no mistake.”

The resumption of his pet phrases, the re-

newed twiggle of his hair, and the revived pull up of his collars, proclaimed "*Johannes redi-vivus.*"

"Well," said the Colonel, with a tone of perfect indifference, "shall we have a touch at *ecarté*? The broiled bones will come at twelve."

"All right, and no mistake," said Jack.

"What shall we play?" said the Colonel, listlessly shuffling one of the two packs of cards which his servant had put down—"don't let it be high—five pound points, and ten pound consequences?"

"Anything you like," said Jack. "I lost twenty pounds to that man at billiards. How he pulled up in his play after the bet!"

"Did he?" said the Colonel—"I didn't observe. Do try some more of that excellent stuff. We will go to-morrow, if you stay here, to an old friend of mine who lives about five miles from this, and I'll show you how *he* drinks it: he'll be delighted to see you."

This put Jack upon the top of a pinnacle. Colonel Stiffkey, after all he had seen and heard, proposed the very next day to take him

to visit an old friend at his place five miles off! Poor Jack! Colonel Stiffkey had no such friend; neither if he had, would he have taken Jack with him: furthermore, he knew, *that* which Jack at the moment had himself quite forgotten, that he could not stay out the following day where his mother was: but Stiffkey wanted Jack to play *ecarté* at his ease—and so he did, knowing no more of the game than a child of ten years old.

The results of the sitting were—broiled bones at half past twelve, more of Sir Stumpy Dubs's mixture at half past one, and a retreat at half past two o'clock in the morning, at which time Mr. John Brag handed over to Colonel Stiffkey two hundred and fifty pounds of the cash he had received from Lord Tom Towzle two days before; and an I.O.U. for three hundred and forty more, which the gallant colonel, in consideration of the ready money already received, very readily accepted in part payment of a balance of five hundred and ninety pounds, which, under the influence of Sir Stumpy Dubs's mixture, the curly-headed

adept at *ecarté* had lost to his aristocratic associate.

The friends separated and retired to rest, the colonel's servant kindly assisting Mr. Brag to his room, — the colonel, who required no assistance, going to his room by himself.

It was not, however, until both these worthies — either of them curiously instructive in his way, — had betaken themselves to their respective beds — that the innate truth of their characters was made manifest. Jack, broken down by the most extraordinary combination of circumstances, — abused, degraded, and exposed by the man whom his mother had by way of an agreeable surprise, brought down to see and present to him, in the hope of conciliating everything, lay desponding, as deeply as he could in his peculiar state, as to the mischief his unhappy parent might have done him by her appearance there; consoling himself, on the other hand, in his blessed ignorance of human nature, with the belief that the colonel was so entirely his friend, that not only what had occurred had made no change in his senti-

ments, but that not a syllable of the events of the preceding evening would transpire; and absolutely revelling in the idea that the loss of his five hundred and ninety pounds would not only ensure this much-desired secrecy, but cement a long and lasting friendship between them.

The colonel, who, like a skilful practitioner, had carefully abstained from swallowing the draughts which he had prescribed, laid his cool unthrobbing head upon his pillow, perfectly satisfied with having so well executed his ingenuity in the up-turning of kings, and other curious arrangements of the cards; consoling himself with the justice of outwitting so complete a charlatan as his temporary companion of the tallow tribe; and concluding if he never received one farthing's worth of value for the I. O. U, the worth of which he considered somewhat equivocal, that he had adequately paid himself for the smell of onions and hot rum and water, and the still more oppressive conversation of his friend's intimate connexions immediately after dinner, by the

first receipt of the two hundred and fifty pounds cash in Bank notes.

Such were the thoughts and reflections of Mr. John Brag and his aristocratic friend as they dropped off to their slumber on this memorable night. What visions might have occupied the minds of Mrs. Salmon and her dear J. S. it is not our province even to surmise: they are asleep, and lest the reader should fall into a similar state of quiescence, the chapter ends.



END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

